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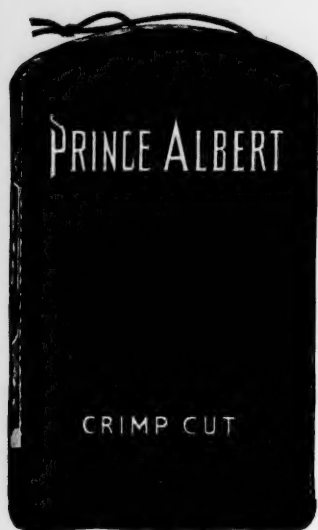
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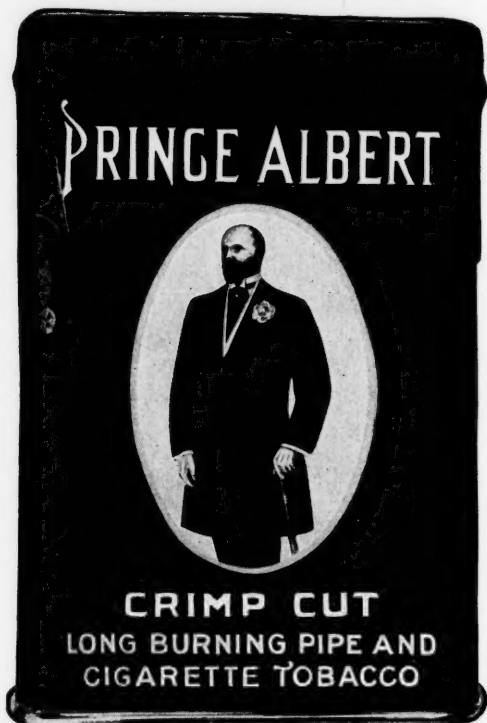
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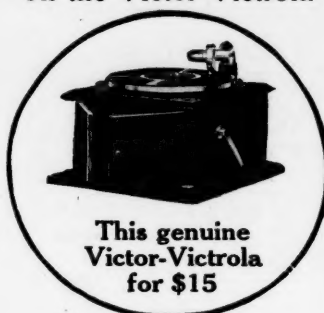
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Vol. XV

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 6

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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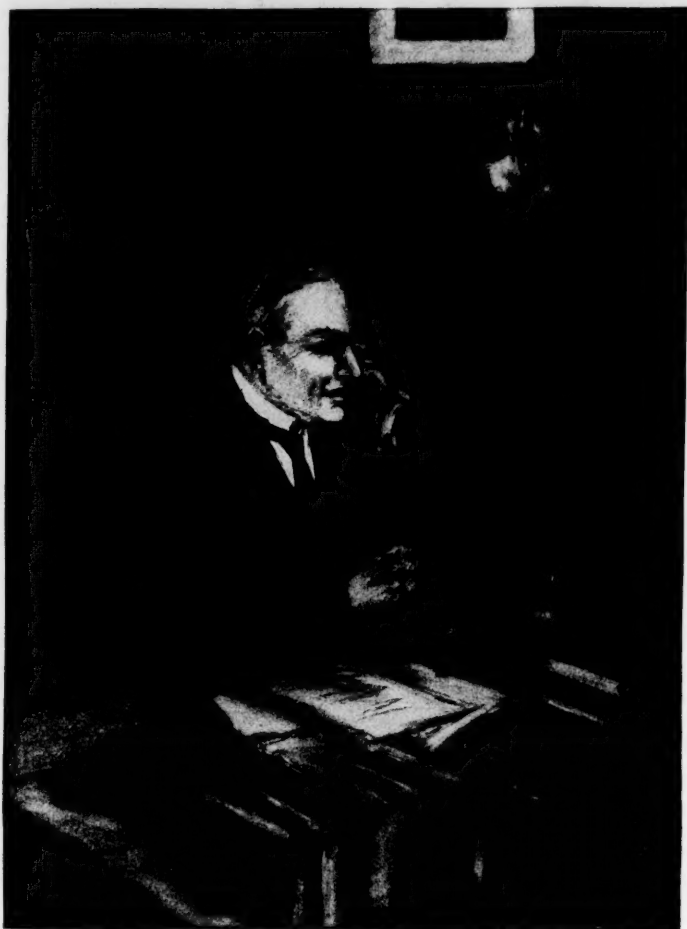
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 15

SEPTEMBER, 1912

NUMBER 6

The King's Carrylton Cups

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Marcia," "In Worlds Not Realized," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

PROLOGUE.

IT is a strange, sometimes even an awful, thing to reflect upon the throbbing life that is linked with all the dead bits of metal and stone that men have wrought for themselves; to think what stories are forever lost behind the catalogued number of an old snuffbox in a dealer's list, what tales of passion and despair, of high-hearted gayety and eternal-seeming love are part and parcel of every old chair, every old candlestick that the auctioneers knock down to the highest bidder and that the experts scan with keen, skeptical eyes. Histories more thrilling than any bound in cloth and leather are there, dramas and novels more fiery and more sweet than those ever acted or written—all shut up in silence in the wood and silver, the porcelain and the jewels that men made long ago to house themselves or to deck themselves for their pitiful little day.

It is not wonderful that sometimes, with a superstitious shiver, a modern man may feel that they bring their influence with them, the old pieces that his ancestors or another's have left, the old houses in which they lived. It is not wonderful that legends of misfortune cling to certain jewels, and that some houses seem places of happy omen.

In the books of the connoisseurs you will sometimes find mention of the Twin

Carrylton Cups. Compared with the stories that belong to some old silver vessels and old furniture and old jewels, the story of the origin of the cups is not remarkable; and yet life and death, loyalty and honor, and dishonor were all a part of them, innocent half spheres of silver though they seem.

In those dim, ancient days when Charles the Second, of England, did not reign, but stole hither and thither, plotting how he might come again to his own throne, there dwelt in Scotland a loyalist gentleman named James Carryl. He had been named, indeed, for Charles' royal grandfather, James Stuart, and that in itself would have probably made him a supporter of the house of Stuart, for he was a simple-minded man, seeing only one thing at a time, and seeing that very clearly indeed.

He was ten years old when the young prince whom he was destined to follow was born in London, and his father made a festival to celebrate the event. Naturally, therefore, when the young prince became a wanderer, James Carryl served his cause. When Charles came back to Scotland, and was crowned at Scone, James Carryl was among those who swore fealty to the royal stripling. He followed the king to defeat at Worcester, and bore a heavy heart when the young man again became a refugee.

That he suffered comparatively little in the way of reprisal at the hands of

Cromwell's supporters was due to the fact that his wife's family had certain Roundhead influence, and that his "in-laws" took it upon themselves to promise a great deal upon his behalf which he would have by no means promised on his own.

It was the one jest, the one perception of happy irony, in James Carryl's life that although he owed his immunity from severe punishment after the defeat of his master to his wife's Cromwellian connections, he owed his wife herself to his loyalism, to his devotion to the Stuart side. Staid, kerchiefed, capped Sara had been as willful a maid as if she had worn curls on her head and buckles on her slippers. She had fumed against the rules of her father's household as if she had lived more than two centuries later, when it is quite the fashion for young ladies to be at odds with their parents upon all sorts of questions. She was as ardent a little cavalier as if she had been born in the shadow of St. James' Palace, and the reason why she chose James Carryl over her other suitors was because he was for the king and against Cromwell.

She was a good deal younger than her husband, and a great deal livelier, and he could scarcely have appealed to her imagination had he come in any other guise than that of the poor exiled king's friend. Sara was a passionate little king's woman; sometimes it almost irked her husband, almost made him feel remote from her, lonely in his own house—her flaming devotion to the refugee. But for the greater part of the time he welcomed her interest as a bond between them rather than disliked it as a barrier. It was the closest bond that had come to them for the first five years of their marriage, as they had no children.

Well, as the plots went on, and as Charles slipped across the water now and then to hearten his followers and to confer with them in wild, distant places, he came at last to James Carryl's place. He came clad with the double charm of prince and of gypsy. By devious routes—through forest, over cliff, and in cave—he met with the men

who conspired to return him to his throne.

And Sara, her heart at white heat of loyalty and devotion, waited upon him in her husband's house. No servant might be trusted for that service. Charles found the fiery, shining hazel eyes, with their dense rim of black lashes, very beautiful to look into; he found the reddish, shining curls very tempting against the white neck. James Carryl bored him; all his good advisers and adherents bored him with their cautions and their wisdom and their apprehensions. The open, starry adoration of Sara was a relief from all the solemn conferences.

Well, that time the conspiracy was successful. Half a year later Charles went back to his throne, this time to stay until a hand grimmer, more relentless even than Cromwell's should snatch him thence. And he rewarded some of those who had helped to reestablish him there. To James Carryl he gave title and estate, and the gracious intimation that he would stand godfather to the Carryl child soon to be born.

James Carryl rejoiced at the condescension; he was glad to carry the news home to his wife, who had of late been strange and silent, moody and melancholy, and altogether incomprehensible to him. She received the information with a great rain of tears, and clung to his breast as to a rock of salvation. Sara's mother and his own told him that by and by, when the period of her trial was past, all her strange tempests would disappear, and she would be herself again; and he listened confidently to their woman's wisdom.

He waited, hoping for the restoration of his wife to her old health. When they told him that he was the father of twin boys, his pride and joy were great. His sovereign graciously and jocosely declared that he would be godfather to both of them, and the royal silversmith set to work upon a cup that should be twin to the one already ordered in preparation for the event.

A wonderful silversmith he was, and beautiful were the half spheres of smooth white silver that he wrought,

with rims of purple enamel, and gems bedded cunningly in the wreaths and cupidons and coats of arms wherewith the cups were engraved. And there was on each the legend telling of the high honor that the king conferred upon the little unconscious, red-faced mites of human beings in being godfather to them.

But Sara, the wife of James Carryl, drooped and pined, and the sight that is most beautiful in a mother's eyes—the sight of her babies—was powerless to brighten her. The honor that was conferred upon them left her listless. And by and by she gave up the effort to live altogether.

But before she died she talked long and earnestly with her husband. And when she was dead and buried he flung back upon the king the titles and estates that the king had bestowed upon him; and he sent the two infants, in charge of his sister, to his old home in Scotland, where he had plotted for the king and had received and served the king.

But he himself went away from his own country, and died, fighting in the service of a foreign king.

And that is the story of the origin of the King's Carrylton Cups, which are sometimes described in books of rareties or in catalogues; but nothing is said of the loyalty and dishonor, the smiles, the tears, and blood which went to their making.

CHAPTER I.

As the train crawled upward through the mountain country, Jared Mather looked from his easy-chair toward his son, lounging opposite him in the private car *Godiva*. The elder Mather, a man of about fifty, studied the younger one with the impersonal attentiveness which he was accustomed to bestow upon all the objects which concerned him.

What he saw—superficially, at any rate—was a long, lean, handsome, somewhat discontented-seeming youth of twenty-one or twenty-two, half engrossed in the novel which he was reading, half bored with the whole present scheme of his existence. What the

shrewd Mr. Mather, financier, railroad magnate, connoisseur, scholar, diplomat, may have seen beneath the olive surface of the young face may have been his wife, who had given her complexion, her grace of body, her restlessness, and discontent of spirit to her only child.

Mr. Jared Mather, whose habit it was to appraise impartially and cold-bloodedly all his belongings, to set them down in the proper side of his ledger of life as profit or as loss, had never deceived himself about Hortense, his wife; at any rate, after the honeymoon. The boy certainly was like his mother. Even this escapade, which had made his temporary retirement from college necessary—this foolish, uproarious performance at the local theater—how it suggested Hortense in her wilder, less controllable moods!

"You don't seem to take much interest in the scenery, Buck," he observed, pleasantly enough.

Buchanan raised his eyes from the page before him, yawned, and said:

"No—I'm like you there. I prefer art to the finest nature—a picture to a real landscape any day."

"You except dramatic art?" laughed his father. "Or was it appreciation that moved you to that demonstration at New Haven?"

"Dramatic art? Dramatic rot!" replied the boy vigorously. "But it's good-natured in you to take the hullabaloo so quietly."

"I've never seen the point in making a loud noise when one is hurt. However, I don't want you to run away with the idea that I enjoy having my son and heir suspended from college in his junior year for behaving like a hooligan. I suppose I share the instincts of the most bourgeois father—I hope to see my offspring doing me credit in the world. Apart from that, a noisy performance like yours back there furnishes all the radicals with a very serviceable peg on which to hang sermons about the abuses of private wealth and the like. If you go in for wildness, drunkenness, disorder, blatant extravagance, you can do actual harm to your order and to yourself. You can im-



Buchanan was foremost in the work of relief.

peril your own inheritance by it—mind that!”

“Probably it would be a good thing for me if I hadn’t any inheritance to count on,” replied the boy moodily. “It spoils a man—the expectation of money that he won’t have to work for. I’ve seen more bally asses and bounders who took themselves seriously as something better than their superiors just because they knew they were going to have more money. And the women—they run after you so it’s disgusting.”

His father smiled.

“As long as it’s disgusting, it’s not dangerous. But beware when it doesn’t

it had been running.

The boy showed himself of good material in the crisis, as his father afterward remembered with pride. When the car had settled, he worked diligently from within to aid those who, outside, were striving to reach them. When they emerged to the air again, and it was discovered that the ordinary coaches ahead had suffered more severely than the private car, and that many of their occupants were badly hurt, Buchanan was foremost in the work of relief. He had ideas, too, and knew how “to put things through”—that most valuable of arts to the capitalist’s mind.

seem disgusting, or when they don’t show their pretty little hands quite as openly as they seem to have done so far with you. Halloo!”

The exclamation was forced from him by the sudden grinding, jerking motion of the car. For a second they steadied themselves by gripping the arms of their chairs; then the train stopped with a suddenness that sent them flying backward; and then slowly, gracefully, almost deliberately the private car *Godiva* began to decline sideways upon the sloping growth of cactus through which

That trait was an inheritance from him, the father; Hortense, for all the impulsive generosity which was so like that which the boy displayed now, could never have been accused of any practical ability. No, the boy was part himself; the boy would repay more attention, more guidance than he had hitherto troubled to bestow upon him. He had rather chafed at the thought of this trip of railroad inspection with a son rusticated from college, and for such good cause; but now he was glad of the opportunity it had given him to learn something of the lad.

"It will be twenty hours before they can get the road cleared," announced Buchanan. "I've been talking to the engineer. There was a telegrapher on the train, and he climbed a pole and ticked out a message to the nearest station. Looks as if we were in for it."

"I've seen places offering more resources for a twenty-hour sojourn," said the older man, turning an unfriendly glance upon the country. A rough, broken country it was, gray with dust, gray with cactus, broken, climbing through dull foothills toward a line of timbered mountains on the west. "Looks like a sort of cosmic dump heap."

"Not a sign of a habitation," remarked the boy, scanning the scene with impatient eyes.

At that moment from behind a rough knoll of rock and stunted juniper a man appeared on horseback. Almost of one tint with the dun landscape he seemed as he rode rapidly down toward the wreck. As he came nearer little bits of color flashed out upon him—the knotted handkerchief about his neck was of scarlet, the flannel shirt was blue. But the big sombrero, the riding breeches, the sheepskin chaps were all dusty brown. And the young face beneath the sombrero was tanned and dusty, too, when he came near enough to show them.

He glanced at the occupants of the private car, but passed them by in favor of the uniformed staff of the train. He gave the conductors, the engineer, the firemen, even the porters, his first greeting.

"Mr. Carryl," he announced, "will be pleased to have any of you come up to his place—you can't see it; it's behind that knoll; but it ain't more than half a mile away. You'll be cooler there than down here. He'd have come himself, but he's porely with rheumatism."

But most of the passengers elected to stay where they were, near their injured companions, near their possessions. Jared Mather and his son looked at each other. Already they had been "spotted." Already, now that the first anxiety and terror had passed, men and women were bent upon improving the opportunity afforded by the accident, of expressing their views upon one thing or another to the magnate and his son.

"I think," said Mr. Mather to his valet, who hovered solicitously near, "that I'll accept this kind invitation of the ranchman—if he is a ranchman. Tell Watson to give whatever is necessary out of our stores to the general fund for dinner. And have Sibley send all the bedding from the sleeping car—the day coach was crowded, and there is nothing for half the injured people to rest on. Come along, Buck; this is our opportunity to see the country intimately. That's a most effective slash you wear on your cheek."

Buck put his hand to his face, and drew it away bloody.

"Ugh!" he muttered. "I didn't know I was cut. Wait a minute, sir, till I change my collar. Drown, have we any court-plaster?"

Drown, the invaluable, produced the court-plaster, and in a few minutes the two men were making the ascent toward the knoll. The horseman who had borne the invitation remained behind. Railroad wrecks, he gave the company to understand, were not of such frequent occurrence in the neighborhood that he could afford to miss the social opportunities they afforded.

Beyond the knoll the land dipped suddenly, and there was an unexpected spot of vivid green in the dusty brown of the country. A little group of cottonwood trees gave evidence of a water supply, a narrow clearing waved with corn, and there were vines trained over

the mud walls of the tiny cabin which stood beneath the trees.

"Refreshing after all this blare of blue sky and dusty earth," said Jared Mather to his son.

"Rather," agreed the young man cordially.

Action, the need for quick thought and quick decision, had made another person of him. He was no longer the bored, unresponsive, half-sullen youth who had yawned over a novel that morning.

In the doorway of the hut stood a woman, staring beneath her shading hand out into the brilliant sunlight. Her gaze did not seem to be so much directed toward the approaching gentlemen as beyond them to the trail that led they knew not whither.

"Scarcely a Venus of the waste places, is she?"

Jared smiled as he spoke. She was tall, angular, gaunt, and her calico wrapper fell in graceless lines to her rough-shod feet, but did not hide those appendages. A pair of man's shoes, run over at the heel, laced together with coarse wrapping twine, shod her.

Nevertheless, when she let her rough, big-knuckled hand fall from her forehead, and when she brought her distant gaze home from the trail to the men approaching, her plain, high-colored face brightened with a look of welcome. Jared and his son swept her deep bows.

"Come right in," she urged, not waiting for speech from them. "There isn't anybody killed down there, is there? Dirk was to fly a white rag if there was, and I can't make out any white."

"No; providentially no one was killed, and no one was even very seriously injured," replied Jared. "For a defective rail, it behaved as well as it could. But there are several bad cases of laceration and bruising, a few broken bones, and a great deal of hysteria. Also, there are three doctors, two trained nurses, and several volunteers."

"Roxanna!" called a melodious masculine voice from the dark interior of the cabin. "Ask the gentlemen to come in."

"Yes, Jim. My husband, sir," she

turned to address Jared, "will think it is a godsend, your being wrecked so near our door. He's been bedridden with rheumatism for a month, and he hasn't had a chance to see any one outside of his family. And that never seems to content the menfolks," she added, with a humorous smile.

Jared, with his swift eye for values, decided that she must have been far from a bad-looking woman twenty or twenty-five years before, when hard work and loneliness had not wrought their disfigurements upon her.

They followed her into the dimness of the cabin. Their eyes, adjusted to the keen light of the shadeless outer world, saw nothing for a few seconds. Then they made out the figure of a man reclining in a sort of primitive steamer chair near a rude, red-covered table.

The inner walls of the house were rough half logs, plastered between their chinks with the same mud which coated the whole outside of the dwelling. There were two big windows, with deep sills, and these looked out into the green vegetable patch. A ladder led to the upper story of the cabin; a lean-to kitchen opened into the rough living room. There were shelves about the room, and on them a few books and bits of crockery. A camp bed in the corner was covered with an Indian blanket of gorgeous hues, the one piece of brilliant color in the dim little place.

"How dy do, sir, how dy do?" cried Jim Carryl impatiently from his chair.

He reached out a thin hand, and shook Jared Mather's with force. Then he gave an equally vigorous grasp to young Buchanan's.

"Gad, but it's good to see some one outside the family, even if it did take a railroad wreck to bring it about!"

"You've been housebound a long time?" inquired Jared, while his son stole swift glances around the room and noted how exquisitely neat it was for all its poverty.

There were delicate harebells in a rude Indian jar on the table. Here and there on the shelves that ran about the room, broken only by the windows and doors, there were wild flowers in bowls

or heavy glasses. He wondered if the angular, middle-aged Roxanna were responsible for these bits of decoration. He decided that she was not. He gave an inattentive ear to the conversation of the two older men. Roxanna, in the lean-to beyond, moved busily about. He thought he had never seen so hideous a color as the purple which spotted her wrapper.

A vision of his own mother rose before his eyes—she would be very charming in linen and lace at this hour of the day; she would be wearing one of those garden hats which became her so—a big thing with a floppy brim half smothered in roses. Her hands were as fine and white as those of that woman out in the kitchen were coarse and gnarled; her shoes—he laughed inwardly at the thought of how his mother would shudder at Roxanna's shoes.

What a cultivated voice that garrulous man in the invalid's chair had! He paused in his reflections to listen to it. It was as cultivated a voice as his father's own—and his father's voice, well modulated, sure, resonant, was one of his best assets. This other man's was not so sure—not so secure of itself and all that it had to utter. It was eager—too eager. Words poured from him in a rush. Evidently he had been starved for conversation, greedy for a new listener. Well, he had a prince of listeners in Jared Mather, who heard other people speak quite as tactfully as he spoke himself.

"The only man from whom I can learn nothing," his father had told him once, "is the one who thinks that he knows everything. All the rest of the world has some valuable information to give to the man who keeps his ears open for it."

Buck did not think that Jim Carryl's flow of talk was likely to give his father any particularly valuable information. He was apparently telling the story of his life. His life, as far as Buck could tell with his half-listless listening, had been a series of failures. He had always been on the verge of some great success, and it had always eluded him by a mere hair's breadth. This did not

seem to have embittered him, or to have made him any less hopeful of ultimate good fortune.

"If a man is hopeful and laborious, sir," he was telling Jared Mather, "success is bound to come to him at last. Else there would be no such thing as justice in the world; and if I did not believe that justice does rule the world—in the long run, sir, in the long run—I should not care to accept existence for another day, sir."

Mr. Mather agreed cordially with this sentiment, and asked Mr. Carryl a few pertinent questions concerning his latest venture. It seemed that he had staked out a mining claim in the hills above the cabin. He had the greatest faith in it, but he had not been able to interest capital, and so he had lacked the means to make the necessary tests.

"But that will come, sir, that will come," he asserted, with easy confidence. "I came West from my home in Virginia primarily in search of health, sir. I don't believe you've mentioned your name? Oh, Mather? Thank you, sir. My own, as I have told you, is Carryl. With the 'y.' Well, Mr. Mather, I came West in search of health. I invested my little patrimony in a ranch in the neighboring State of Colorado. Well, many persons would say that that was an unfortunate investment, for I lost almost everything I owned in the shape of live stock the second winter in a terrific blizzard. But I can't see the ill luck, for it was while I was there—at Lowery—that I met Mrs. Carryl. She taught the little district school. You would scarcely call the Lowery experience wholly bad?"

Mr. Mather agreed heartily with Mr. Carryl's view of the case. Buck had difficulty in repressing a laugh. That poor, homely drudge in the kitchen—that to represent a man's idea of good fortune! Great heavens but this was an unequal world! Again he thought of his own exquisite mother. A man might justly consider that she represented good fortune.

The invalid was continuing his narration. He told a tale of losses—losses of steers, losses of sheep; feuds with

neighbors, cattlemen, who questioned his right to pasture sheep upon the range—the right of a free-born American citizen. He told of unscrupulous persons who had bought his holdings from him for half their value.

But he ended hopefully. Here he was, in a region which his friends had declared to be utterly without advantages. And see—not only was he sure that he had struck a rich vein of copper in the mountain back there, but here at his very door he had struck what was almost equal to a vein of gold—a never-failing spring of perfect water; a spring that gushed and bubbled like a miracle in this arid country, and fed the little canals that watered his garden patch and that kept green his wife's vines and his daughter's rosebush.

He supposed he ought to be honest, and say that the vegetable patch, as well as the vines, was his wife's; he had had enough of farming back there in Virginia, and he would not touch a hoe now if you paid him well for it. No, the vegetable patch was Roxanna's—and Roxie's.

"You have a daughter, then?" This from Jared Mather.

"Yes—and here she comes now."

There was a clatter of hoofs down the trail. The bright patch of light before the open door was shadowed for a moment by the reflection of a pony. A girlish voice, with the same quality of eager hope that Jim Carryl's held, called: "Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Take this truck while I turn Persimmons into the corral."

Mrs. Carryl stomped gracelessly to the door, caught a burlap bag which had hung across the pommel of the pony's saddle, cried: "Back already? Why, you weren't any time!" And then the pony clattered off again. Buck found himself rather interested to see the owner of the voice.

She came in, and it was like the sunlight pouring through a darkened window. She was young—not more than seventeen or eighteen. She had the lithe, active grace of youth. From her tanned throat, visible above the low, rolling collar of her flannel blouse, to

the spurs on the heels of her riding boots, she suggested activity, elasticity. Her friendly, eager, loving brown eyes were like her mother's, but all the rest of her features had been more carefully and delicately modeled than that good woman's. She looked a trifle surprised, but not at all abashed, at the sight of strangers, and she accepted her father's introduction of them with a gentle, accustomed cordiality that seemed very attractive to Buck. In her belt were stuck some spikes of a curious, vivid-purple wild flower. Her father smiled at her.

"Couldn't pass them by, could you?" he asked, nodding toward the blossoms.

"No." She smiled tenderly on him in return. "I thought how beautiful they'd be in the King's Cup." She moved toward a corner of the room, and reached up for a bowl on the shelf. "Mercy! It hasn't been cleaned for an age!" she cried.

And with that she passed into the kitchen, the bowl in one hand and her flowers in the other.

"The King's Cup?" Jared Mather repeated the young girl's words with an inquiring smile.

His host nodded indifferently.

"An heirloom," he stated, without any particular interest. And then he went on talking about the claim he had preempted in the hills.

Roxie came back in a few minutes. She bore the bowl and the flowers. But the bowl had been transformed. It was no longer a dull, indistinguishable piece of doubtful metal in a dusky corner. It was a fair, lovingly fashioned piece of white silver, soft as velvet, rimmed in purple enamel, chased and engraved and sparkling.

"May I see it, Miss Carryl?" Mather cried. "I am a collector—that is, I dabble a little in such matters. It looks to me as though you had a wonderful piece there."

Roxie brought him the cup, and he studied it. He polished his glasses, and read the inscription beneath the old royal coat of arms. He emptied out the water, and studied the London hall mark and the maker's mark.

"Exactly!" he said. "It is a piece of Fox's—here is his own mark—a fox in a lozenge. It is a treasure, my dear Mr. Carryl. That is, if it is genuine. There is a bowl much like it, to the best of my recollection, in the collection of the Marquis of Dalrymple, one of the most discerning collectors of antiques in England. But there may, I suppose, be several christening cups of much the same design. Even a king could not do much better than to duplicate such a present as this. But let me think. The Dalrymple cup is called the King's Carrylton Cup. And this—" He peered at the letter which time had dimmed but had by no means effaced. "This is to 'Charles Robert, son of James Carryl, of Carrylton, from his godfather, Char——' Why, this must be a forgery—or else Dalrymple's is. Not even a lavish king could give two cups to a godson."

"There were two godsons," answered Carryl. "It's a family story handed down along with the cup. My ancestor, Charles Robert, came into the world some seconds later than James. And, being a second son, he fared like one. The estates descended to the eldest born. But my ancestor received some royal grants of lands in the Virginias. He'd hate to see how they've dwindled now!"

James Carryl laughed without bitterness. The idea of the fallen fortunes of his house seemed only to amuse him. "Can the story be authenticated?"

Jared Mather asked it calmly, but his



"It is a piece of Fox's—ere is his own mark. It is a treasure, my dear Mr. Carryl."

son noticed that he did not hand the cup back to the graceful girl waiting to take it from him. Buck had a secret hope that his father was going to offer to buy the cup at a price which would set the humble family up, as he phrased it to himself. Until Roxie had come in he had not been deeply interested in the matter.

"Oh, it's authentic enough," replied Carryl indifferently.

"You do not seem to set great store by your relic?"

Mr. Mather looked shrewdly upon his host. Carryl looked up in surprise.

"Why, I don't know," he answered.

"I've always had it—it always descended to the oldest son. I'm the first to break the direct line; I have only a daughter to whom to leave it. Of course, I value it. But—as one values

what one has always possessed—a mother when one is a child, breath, the ordinary thing."

"Buck," said his father, "why do you not try to persuade Miss Carryl to show you her garden? Didn't you say there was a rosebush, Mr. Carryl?"

And then Buck knew that the connoisseur was awake in his sire, and that he was going to try to dicker with the rheumatic old man for the King's Cup.

"I hope he doesn't try to jew him down," thought Buck, as he followed the girl out of the room and into the sunlight.

He knew that his parent valued wealth as perhaps only those who possess it can value it; more exactly than many a poor man did Jared Mather insist upon a dollar's worth for every dollar he spent. Still, in his collecting he was not niggardly—at any rate, when the object at stake was worth while—and when he had competitors. Buck thought ruefully that it was a pity there was no competition here. If the Marquis of Dalrymple, for example, were only here to bid against him!

He followed Roxie through the lane of tall, waving corn, and through the path bordered greenly with blossoming potato vines, and finally out into the little orchard space with the flowers among the quince and peach trees.

He thought he had never seen any human eyes quite so kind and so sweet as hers; he had seen dogs' eyes capable of the same liquid look of loyalty and devotion. He contrasted her with the girls he had known out of his mother's set, and he drove the comparison back into the dark recesses of his mind. She commanded clean thoughts, high thoughts, this slip of a Western girl, with her wistful voice and her wistful, quick smile, and her open-hearted friendliness.

She was not quite so communicative as her father, but before long he had learned all the facts of her simple history. He had learned of the winter's schooling her mother had managed to achieve for her in Denver. He learned of the little school that she taught back in the mining settlement ten miles off

among the hills. He learned of the shy ambition she had—"to make things with her hands." She could weave, she told him, like the Indian women—blankets and baskets. She could model little jugs like theirs, and bowls, and rude cooking utensils. A woman who had once spent the summer at the place where the Carryls were then living had sent her some magazines on handicraft work.

"When dad's vein proves itself, that's what we're going to do," she told him. "We're going East so that I can study all those things. I—if you will come with me I'll show you something."

He went—and there, back of the tangle of green she had won from the desert, he found the rude, half-canvas, half-mud shack that she had made for herself. And in it were her treasures—the work of her slender, aspiring hands. There were little bowls fashioned of the clay of the region, with designs pricked sketchily upon them with a pointed stick. There were the lengths of blanket woven Indian fashion.

And then she drew aside one of the pieces of blanket that curtained a very innermost shrine, and she showed him her more ambitious work—the lithe, brown figure of a little Indian baby, a coyote poised for a spring, a baby bear. Her eager eyes besought his verdict.

If his father could take a great joy in the discovery of a piece of artistry, Buck suddenly found that he could have a like joy in the discovery of an artist. He wrung her hand, he congratulated her. He was conscious of a great desire to be the unfold of her talent. It was, when he came to think it over afterward, the first unselfish desire he ever remembered having in his life.

"Let me show them to my father," he cried. "He—he's great on art—it's his long suit—that, and business. He's director in a dozen art schools, and patron of all the museums in the world. He's got scholarships and fellowships up his sleeve in any quantity. He could fix you up in a minute."

But in a panic she protested. She did not want her opportunity yet; she could take it only when it meant that she could still be with her parents. He had

a glimpse of a union such as he had not conceived possible—selfless, glad, complete. The plain woman in the impossible wrapper was glorified for him in her daughter's love.

Afterward he could not remember whether she had called his attention to the beauty which there was in the dun landscape under the glare of the sun, but he realized suddenly that he was seeing it with new eyes—that the sharp-cut peaks had taken on a majesty they had not worn before, that there were wonderful violets and amethysts in the distant airs, that even the sparse vegetation beyond the little island of living green in which they walked took on depths and warmth where they had been bleak before.

By and by the calico-clad mother came to the cabin door and called the young people in. Buck observed with some amusement that his father, who was not without the possibility of development as a gourmet, had accepted the eager invitation of Jim Carryl to stay to supper. The red cover had been removed from the center table, and a white one was laid upon it. A big gray enamel coffeepot steamed at one end, a great platter of biscuits dominated one side; corn on the ear, enveloped in mists, was not without a fragrant charm; and there was a hot Mexican dish in which rice and pork and peppers were happily blended. Mrs. Carryl pulled the sleeves of her wrapper down over her roughened forearms as she took her place at the table.

"Oh, mother, you ought to have called me to help you!" protested Roxie, when she found all the work of preparing supper done.

Her mother smiled the indulgent smile of all mothers, and her warm, dog-like brown eyes glowed tenderly.

"You don't get any too much chance to meet with other young folks," she said.

"Your daughter has been showing me the wonderful things she does," said Buck to Mrs. Carryl.

"She's got talent, don't you think?" asked the mother eagerly.

"Oh, mother!" protested Roxie, blushing.

Jared looked with a certain patronizing kindness at the girl.

"You must let me see your work," he told her. "I really know more of such things than this boy of mine does—his specialty is high-g geared cars at present."

But here Jim Carryl, who was not at the table, but who took his supper from a tray balanced across the arms of his invalid chair, broke in. He was as interested in motor cars as though he had had an intimate acquaintance with them, instead of knowing them chiefly from advertising cuts in the occasional magazines that strayed in his way. Once, he said, he had had the opportunity to examine one closely; that was when one of the directors of the mines ten miles above them had made a brief, important visit of inspection to his properties. Jim was as sure that he saw a means of improving that car as he was sure of the copper in his claim above the cabin. A joyous confidence in himself—or, rather, in the universe in which he lived—had persisted through all his discouraging experiences.

Buck Mather looked at him with the look, half pity, half contempt, wholly amazement, which youth bestows upon elderly failures; and Jared fixed his pince-nez more firmly on his aristocratic nose, and stared as at a new specimen. But Roxie and her mother glowed with pride and confidence in this wonderful hero of theirs who might have manufactured—nay, invented—automobiles had he not been otherwise occupied.

One other recollection besides that of the funny little studio hidden in the green oasis of the desert Buck carried away with him the next day when the railroad sent out fresh engines and cars to carry the wrecked passengers on to their destinations. That was a recollection of low-hung stars—it almost seemed to him that by stretching on tip-toe a little he could touch them; of a pungent, aromatic odor on the cool night air, and of the uncertain, flutelike notes

of a young girl's voice as she talked of her aspirations.

He and Roxie had gone out into the darkness together after supper, Jared having made his way down to the wreck while daylight lingered to show him the trail. Mrs. Carryl had never heard of the institution of chaperon, and only smiled her simple pleasure that Roxie should "see something of some young company" as she watched the two young people slip beyond the circle of light from the window.

Buck felt that the situation demanded some sentimental recognition from him, but he was at a loss how to offer it. To his own surprise, he found that he could not even ask Roxie to give him her photograph, or to correspond with him, as was his simple young collegian custom with most maidens. When he finally wrung her hand at parting, he said, sincerely enough:

"I do hope that I'll see you again somewhere some time."

And Roxie, with her uncertain, nervous little laugh, had answered:

"Oh, when dad proves his vein and sells the Roxanna Mine, and we come to New York for me to learn to be a great sculptor—why, I'll surely let you know."

"That's a promise?" Buck asked it with an eagerness that rather astonished himself, and was touched by the sudden sadness in her voice as she responded: "Yes, a promise for when my ship comes in."

His father was waiting for him in the dismantled private car. Buck's kinder emotions had been sufficiently stirred to make him rather dread any close scrutiny from his parent; the kindly emotions seemed simple, bourgeois, even banal, when exposed to Jared Mather's educated gaze. But to-night the great man was too preoccupied to notice the slight haze, as it were, which enveloped his son. He plunged at once into his own affairs.

"Would you believe it," he asked, "that idiot back there refuses to sell his christening cup at any price?"

"Are you sure it's the genuine

thing?" Buck felt an undefined sense of relief in his father's preoccupation.

"Of course I made my offers dependent upon the authenticity of the legend. But there is very little doubt in my own mind. Even if it were a forgery, the cup is a gem; it is exquisite. But it is out of the question that a hare-brained miner in these God-forsaken hills should own such a thing except by inheritance. I believe it is the genuine thing—the King's Carrylton Cup—in better condition even than the one in Dalrymple's collection."

He scowled a little gloomily toward the broken panel of Circassian walnut at the end of the car.

"Where did Dalrymple get his?" Buck asked. "Was he of the original Carryl stock?"

"Dalrymple?" Mr. Mather laughed. "No; he's the first of his line; he was Hopkins, a manufacturer of shoe blacking. But he put up a lot for the Boer War. He paid for his peerage that way. He bought the cup at a sale at Christie's about six years ago; I had Morrovitch there bidding for me on some things. He's usually pretty good, but he let the Carrylton Cup get away from him on one of those penny-wise impulses which men have sometimes even when they're spending other men's money. It was the Hertford collection that was dispersed that time. Hertford had gotten the cup at a sale some time in the seventies."

"How much did Lord Dalrymple pay for the cup?" asked Buck.

"Three thousand guineas. It was the highest price ever paid for a single piece of antique silver. It made a new record."

"And how much did you offer the rheumatic miner?"

Buck lighted a cigarette as he spoke, and looked at his father mischievously. Jared laughed.

"I went as high as five thousand dollars," he answered. "My dear fellow, this was not a sale at Christie's."

"Apparently not!" retorted Buck dryly.

"The man was insane not to take my offer. It would have insured him

means of working his mine at least to the point of discovering whether it was a vein or merely a pocket—or a plant. Or, if he didn't want to do that, it would have been a—a modest competence——” Buck broke into a derisive laugh, and, after a frowning second, his father joined him. “But you don't suppose, do you, that Mr. Jim Carryl—or Mrs., either—include in their necessities what you and your mother regard as essential?”

Buck shrugged his shoulders, and dismissed the matter. But he felt a sort of contempt for his father. When he came into his own, he decided, he would go back to the cabin, and would buy the King's Cup for the record price; it wouldn't be so long—his grandfather had left him part of a million, into which he would come at twenty-five. Of course, old Carryl would never refuse such an offer as the one he would make, and it would not be too late for that shy, friendly, aspiring young creature to have her chance in the world.

That was all Buck desired for her. Yet, as he fell asleep by and by—he chose to spend the night in the camp the wrecked passengers had made outside, and to give up his own quarters to some of the older men—he seemed to feel the flutter of her small firm hand in his as she had bade him good-by, and had promised to let him know when her ship came in.

CHAPTER II.

The furnishings of Mrs. Van Cleek's front parlor did not suggest great affluence. They were heavy, somber, and shabby. Sticklers for charm in household surroundings would have found them altogether impossible. From the worn moquette carpet to the carved and gilded mermaids on the chandeliers, from the picture of Niagara above the mantelpiece to the moth-eaten cover of the cumbrous grand piano, there was nothing inviting about the place.

Yet it was to this room that young Adolph Wohlhaupter each evening besought Miss Roxanna Carryl to accompany him. His pretexts were two:

Either he wished her to play accompaniments for his German songs or he wished to show her German post cards which had arrived in that day's mail. Miss Carryl's fellow boarders, scenting romance, and not having had their innate sympathy with it blunted even by a residence at Mrs. Van Cleek's, used to try to further the young man's plans. Uncomplainingly they submitted to the boom of his bass voice in sentimental German ditties; uncritically they declared that Roxanna's accompaniments were perfect.

When they saw her gliding swiftly out of the basement dining room they were in the habit of calling to her: “Miss Carryl, are you and Mr. Wohlhaupter going to give us a little music to-night?” They thought themselves fairy godmothers when they did this, and they declared that old Mr. Carryl was as selfish as he could be when he broke in upon their arrangements, saying that he needed Roxie's help himself in the plans he was drawing.

Roxie was twenty now, and she had been for a year in New York. Her ship had not come in with any great spread of canvas, and she had never let Buchanan Mather know of her presence in the city. She was still wearing black for her mother; it had never been very stylish black, and it was growing distinctly shabby in spite of all that she could do with ammonia and water and needle and thread to keep it presentable. But the look of friendly, wistful expectation never faded from the face above the shabby black blouse.

Roxie and her father had come to New York after he had sold the Roxanna Mine. He had sold it for next to nothing, for a song, for enough to pay his debts and his wife's funeral expenses and his fare to New York, and the fee of the patent lawyer whom he had engaged to protect his latest enthusiasm—a mechanical dishwasher.

The idea had come to him, he explained excitedly, while he lay stretched helpless in his invalid chair and watched his wife and daughter at the endless task of clearing up. It wasn't right that a woman should have to pass her whole

life washing plates and knives and cups and saucers and frying pans and stew pots, he declared; and he seemed to think that because this was so obvious a fact his mechanical dishwasher must be a success.

His interest in it, his enthusiasm over it, had made the forced sale of the Roxanna Mine bearable to him, and it almost seemed as if his deepest grief when Mrs. Carryl died was that she had died too soon to know the pleasure of housekeeping with his invention.

But the place which she had somehow invested with the atmosphere of joy and contentment, in spite of their poverty and her own drudgery, was no longer endurable to him after they had buried her. Besides, as he told Roxie, the East was the only place where he could hope to sell his invention; the East was the place where she must go and study now that they had a few thousand dollars between them and starvation. And to the East they came.

Some of her mother's hard-won wisdom mingled in Roxie with her father's confidence, his joyful faith. She wished to be a sculptor, but she discerned that the demand for statuary was neither so large nor so steady as that for various household appliances. It was, therefore, to a certain rather notable handicraft school that she first went to enroll herself as a pupil. Pure art would come later; first she must be equipped

with some means of helping her father. Something told her that the mechanical dishwasher was to go the same way as so many other of his plans for making their fortune.

They had gone over their expense accounts together one day. Roxie had wanted to see how they could reduce their monthly output of money, her father to learn how much remained of

their original pile, that he might decide how much to offer a new factory for manufacturing his invention and putting it on the market. Neither one felt greatly cheered by the result.

"Father, we will simply have to go up another flight," declared Roxie desperately.

"I'll simply have to get hold of another set of men," declared Jim Carryl. "It's absurd for them to want me to finance the whole undertaking. There must be men somewhere who would be willing to put up the money themselves. Why, they'll make sixty per cent on what they put in!"

"Father," insisted Roxie, half laughing, half pleading, "won't you listen to me? I'm telling you that we must reduce our expenses. We must move up another flight. The big back room and the little one off it are vacant again—I heard Mrs. Van Cleek bemoaning the fact only yesterday. We must take those. You won't mind climbing another flight, will you?"

"It isn't going to be necessary, my dear," said Jim Carryl tenderly. "Three



She drew aside one of the pieces of blanket that contained a very innermost shrine.

months ought to get this whole matter wound up, and then we'll be in receipt of a regular income—a very comfortable income. Surely we've got plenty to go on with for three months?"

"Yes, but suppose the dishwasher is not bringing in an income at the end of three months? We've been here more than a year, and are we really any nearer an income than we were when we came? Oh, I'm not doubting the value of the dishwasher, dear—you know I'm not. But business is so slow, so involved; everything takes so much longer than one expects it to."

"Miss Carryl! Miss Carryl!" The voice floated along the hall, preceding by a second a rap on the door.

"Oh, bother!" murmured Roxie under her breath, as she recognized the voice.

She went to the door, and opened it. Young Mr. Wohlhaupter, tall, but already inclining to stoutness, stood beaming down upon her from behind his round-rimmed glasses. In his hand he held some sheets of music.

"Oh, Miss Carryl," he began, "some of the ladies have stopped in the parlor for a little music. I said I would sing if you could play my accompaniments. I hope I do not interrupt you?"

"I am so sorry," declared Roxie politely, "but my father and I are very much——"

"Run along, Roxie—run along with Mr. Wohlhaupter, and have some music," interrupted her father. "We're not doing anything that can't be just as well put off. I'll come down myself by and by when I have attended to a little correspondence I have here. Run along, Roxie! You ought to have more recreation, anyway."

Roxie looked at him with affectionate despair, and at the beaming Adolph with a sort of resignation.

"Very well, then, since my father thinks he doesn't need me, I'll come down in a few minutes—just as soon as I've tidied up a bit."

"You don't need to tidy up to look lovely, Miss Carryl," announced Mr. Wohlhaupter, with an elaborate bow.

He cast a rather languishing glance upon her as she closed the door.

"Idiot!" murmured Roxie pleasantly, as she entered the room again.

"Why, he seems to me rather a nice young man," objected her father mildly. "He's doing very well, too, so they tell me. He represents some German toy factory over here, and some one was saying the other day he had done so well that they were going to open a regular American branch, and put him at the head of it. Quite an able young man, I should say—and always very polite to me."

"Yes, father," said Roxie dutifully through the door which opened into her own room.

She was bending over her trunk, looking through a compartment for a fresh jabot. A canton flannel bag with white draw strings occupied the greater part of the section.

"Dad," she called, "I do wish you'd do something with the King's Cup—put it in a deposit vault, or some thing, I mean. It isn't safe in my trunk. Ever since that Mr. Mather who was wrecked out home offered you that fabulous sum for it, and you refused it, like the dear old goose you are, it has worried me just to have it around. Suppose the place should catch fire—think of five thousand dollars worth of silver being melted up, to say nothing of ever so many of millions of dollars worth of family history!"

"Well, I'll see to it some day soon," answered Jim Carryl, rustling his papers. "But as for it's being five thousand dollars worth of silver, that's a crazy notion—there isn't five hundred dollars worth to it. That man's offer only goes to show," continued Jim, very sagely, "to what lengths of extravagance impractical men go."

"I suppose that you feel quite practical, refusing thousands of dollars for a thing which you declare is not worth one?"

Roxie had reentered his room, and smiled down affectionately upon her parent from the superior position of one standing. Jim Carryl shot a quick, suspicious glance up at her.

"You wouldn't sell it, would you?"

His tone was sharp and curt. Roxie looked at him wonderingly.

"It isn't mine to sell—" she answered.

"But when it is yours—when I am gone?" he persisted.

"Why, dad," she answered affectionately, "of course I shouldn't do anything you didn't want me to do with it. I've never thought much about it one way or the other until Mr. Mather offered you all that money. Then, of course, we were so poor—you were so crippled—mother worked so hard—" She broke off vaguely.

"Then you blame me for not selling it?" Her father hurled the words at her almost angrily.

"I never blamed you for anything in my life," Roxie repudiated the notion with a flush of feeling. "I only wondered—that was all."

He allowed his searching gaze to rest upon her for a second longer, and then, with a sigh, he averted his eyes. He began to speak to her rapidly, half apologetically.

"She never blamed me, either," he said; "your mother. She had the right to. I never did for her what lots of men seem able to do for their wives, though God knows no man ever cared more for his wife, or had one so well worth doing for. But I never seemed to make a go of things; it wasn't exactly lack of brains—stupider men than I have made good livings for their families. I don't know how it was. I only know I never seemed able to bring in money. But she always acted as though money didn't count; she always acted as if she was happy."

"She was—she was, dear," Roxie broke in eagerly. "She was always full of happiness and love."

"Sometimes it has bothered me," the old man pursued, "that I didn't sell the King's Cup that time. Maybe if she hadn't had to drudge so just then—"

"Oh, no, no! Don't torment yourself that way," Roxie, tearful, was on her knees beside his chair. "You know the doctor said it was bound to come—that

nothing would have made any difference."

"I know what he said, all right," answered Jim gloomily. "I know what he said. But doctors say a lot that they don't know. It's often troubled me, my not selling that time. But"—he turned sharply upon her again—"since I didn't sell it for her, we'll never sell it for ourselves, will we?"

"Never, never!" sobbed Roxie.

"You see, it's like this," the old man went on: "It may be all right for the other Carryls—the ones that got the title and the estates—to sell what they please. They've got something besides a piece of tarnished silver to show the world what they are, and to mind their descendants of what they have been. But with us it's different. Every generation has had less and less to pass on to the one that followed. It's all I've got to leave you. I never could sell it—the proof that you came of gentlefolks, and that the Carryls were the friends of kings when kings counted for something. And I want you to keep it, and to hand it down to your children. It would have made me feel that I was selling my birthright for a mess of pottage to have taken that fellow's money for the cup—even to have made things easier for your mother. You'll never sell it, will you, Roxie?"

Again the girl sobbed out: "Never—never!"

"Now, dry your eyes, my pretty," he said, patting her, "and run on down to play for the young man. And"—he hesitated, and laughed a little, in a sad sort of way—"if you want to speak to Mrs. Van Cleek about moving upstairs you may. We'll be very saving and practical until the machine is really on the market."

Roxie muttered something not altogether favorable to the musical ability of Mr. Adolph Wohlhaupter, but she obediently washed the traces of tears from her face, and went downstairs. And in a few minutes the sounds of "*Muss ich denn, muss ich denn*," were booming lustily through the halls of Mrs. Van Cleek's establishment.

It was the custom for Mr. Wohl-

haupter's audience to melt unostentatiously out of the gloomy drawing-room during the progress of his singing. With knowing little smiles and gestures commanding silence, they would one by one nod their good nights to him as he stood by the piano, facing them, and would slip away, leaving him, at least, in their intent, a clear field for his wooing.

As soon as Roxie, warned by the lack of applause, or by the subtle sense of isolation, whirled about on the piano stool to find the room deserted, she always rose to her feet, and bade the singer a firm good night. No pleas for another song, no entreaties that she should stay and look at the latest invoice of Munich post cards, ever caused her to tarry for a single second. Mr. Wohlhaupter's languishing brown eyes were wont to express a combination of emotions at her abrupt good night—admiration and commendation for her maidenly caution, and the utter bereavement of the lover. But to-night, when the invariable little comedy was about to begin, he stayed her with a new gesture.

"Just a minute, gracious *fräulein*," he entreated. "Just a minute. I have something which I must say to you. I stay in America always." He beamed proudly. Roxie looked at him, bewildered, amused, inquiring. "Yes, always," he repeated. "My firm, they open a new branch in your country; they make me the head. I have a big position, many men work for me, my salary it is large."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Wohlhaupter," said Roxie sweetly, but edging nearer to the door. "It must be very gratifying to have your ability recognized, and your hard work rewarded."

Adolph, standing very straight, brought his heels together, and made her an entirely correct Teutonic bow from the waist. But he put out his hand as though to detain her when she moved a step nearer to the door.

"Wait, *fräulein*, wait!" he cried breathlessly. His face had grown quite pale, and the eyes behind his large spectacles were darkened with excitement. "Wait. That is not all."

Roxie's face grew a little pale also. She felt a fluttering sense of danger. No one had ever proposed to her; she didn't count as a proposal Bud Henshaw's parting declaration, at Cloud Cap, that he meant to come to New York and get her before two years were up; but she had a sickening certainty that Mr. Wohlhaupter was going to remedy the defect in her experience immediately. So she put up her little hand in the nervous gesture of one trying to ward off a blow, and said incoherently:

"Oh, no; I'm so sorry, but I can't wait. My father is expecting me. It is very nice about your position, and you must come in and tell him all about it some time. Good night."

"But it is about your father that I wish to speak," declared Mr. Wohlhaupter.

Roxie's cheeks flamed as she laughed nervously. Was it possible, she wondered, he knew what an absurd and conceited thought she had harbored?

"About my father?" she repeated.

"Yes," declared the young man eagerly. "About his invention—his wonderful invention. Miss Carryl, I can get—what do you call it?—backing for him. I can get men to put it on the market. I have talked with them."

"That was very kind of you, Mr. Wohlhaupter," Roxie answered; "but you will have to talk to my father about that. I do not understand much about the business."

"Ah!" Adolph became exuberantly sentimental. "Ah, but it is only you that knows whether I should have my reward when all the way had been made easy for your father. That you know."

"I am quite sure," answered Roxie—and hearing more acute and less amorous than Mr. Wohlhaupter's would have caught the new steely quality in her voice—"that my father will make the most liberal arrangements possible with any one promoting the manufacture and sale of his machine."

"Ah, but in America a father may not give the reward I entreat. I do not want money." Adolph superbly waved the mercenary thought aside. "I want

only your love, only that fair hand." He made an unsuccessful attempt to possess himself of Roxie's little brown paw. "That is all I want. And it is you and not the honored father who will give me that, is it not so?"

"You have not learned as much of American customs as you seem to think, Mr. Wohlhaupter," answered Roxie disdainfully. "If fathers do not bestow their daughters' hands without a consultation with their daughters, neither do young men mix business with their love-making. Good night."

"But, Miss Carryl!" cried the rebuffed suitor.

"Good night!" repeated Roxie firmly.

She marched up the stairs with her chin in the air, her cheeks very hot, and her heart pounding uncomfortably. Had she interfered with her father's chances of success? But she simply could not—no, she would not—listen to the heavy, mercantile wooing of that oaf downstairs—no, not for twenty inventions!

Downstairs, the young man so abruptly left stood staring at the doorway through which Roxie had vanished with a rather crestfallen air. But gradually the look of puzzlement and offense faded from his round features, and he murmured something in German about admirable maidenly shyness and pride. And, thus consoled, he slowly mounted the stairs toward his own abode.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. and Mrs. Jared Mather were in London for the season. Devout readers of the society news might learn that they had taken a duke's house in Grosvenor Square for three months, and that they were prepared to do some notable things in the line of entertaining. These readers might also learn that Mrs. Mather's gown at the first royal drawing-room of the season was of a magnificence to reflect the greatest possible glory upon the proud democracy which was responsible for Mrs. Mather and her taste in clothes.

Furthermore, they might acquire the information that Mr. Buchanan Mather, who had spent his first year out of col-

lege working in his father's office, would probably join his parents later in the season. Just now, so the chronicles read, he was making a tour of inspection of his father's Western properties.

One morning when the infrequent London sunshine was brightening the brocade hangings in his wife's boudoir, Mr. Mather entered that apartment. There was a more enthusiastic light than usual behind his glasses, and he almost beamed upon the nominal partner of his joys and sorrows as she sat before her Louis Quinze mirror, and watched her maid deftly make of her brown hair an imposing edifice. Mrs. Mather paid to her lord's uncommonly alert and interested expression the tribute of a question.

"What gives you that blithe May-morning look?" she asked him, smiling.

For answer he held out a card to her. She glanced at it quizzically.

"Another collection? It seems to me the most amazing thing in the world the way you men collect and collect, only to have your heirs disperse your treasures the moment you are safely buried." She glanced at the card, and read aloud from it:

"The collection of the late Earl of Dalrymple, comprising paintings by old and modern masters, historic furniture, and antique silver. To be sold at Christie's."

She returned the card to her husband, and shook her head. "Strange passion!" she ended.

Jared took the card, and stared at it, the pleased, ruminative smile still on his features.

"Curious," he said, "what a hold that Carrylton Cup I saw out at Cloud Cap took on me. I have sometimes questioned if it was its unexpectedness, the impossible crudity of its setting, that made it appeal so strongly to me. I shall have a chance to determine now—Dalrymple's collection has its twin."

"And I suppose you will not rest until you own it?" said his wife coldly.

Jared bent his sophisticated gaze upon her.

"You have always sympathized so with my fads—yes, and with my ambitions—have you not, Hortense?"

"Oh," she answered impatiently, "I suppose we hit it off about as well as most people."

She leaned toward a pile of unopened letters lying on her dressing table.

"The signal of dismissal, dear?" Mr. Mathers smiled cynically upon his spouse. "Very well. But you must come with me to Christie's the day the King's Cup is up for sale. I'm sure you can't fail to appreciate it, with your discriminating eye for beauty."

"Oh, here's a letter for you mixed in with my mail. It seems to be from Buck," added Mrs. Mather, as she handed the letter to her husband.

"So it is." Jared looked at the postmark. "What an execrable hand he writes! May I read it here? There may be something you would like to hear."

"Of course," answered Mrs. Mather, but without undue cordiality.

Whatever the letter might contain that Mrs. Mather might like to hear, it was almost immediately evident that it was not at all to Mr. Mather's taste. A frown appeared between his eyebrows, and the corners of his mouth descended sharply, ominously.

"Anything wrong?"

Mrs. Mather asked the question worriedly. She shared the misgivings of the mothers of her class, and regarded the world as peopled largely with unscrupulous chorus girls and waitresses, all lying in wait for young millionaires off their guard. She had breathed a great sigh of relief when Buchanan had succeeded in finishing his college course without presenting her with a quite impossible daughter-in-law. But she knew that the period of danger was not yet over.

"His health is perfectly good, if that's what you mean, and he is not making a conspicuous ass of himself, as far as his own story goes. In fact, he's turned moralist. He censures me for my purchase of the Roxanna Mine at a price which has made it a very profitable property." He tossed the letter over to his wife. "There, read it for yourself."

"I hope Buck isn't getting socialistic

notions," said Buck's mother anxiously, as she began to read the letter.

Socialistic notions, in her creed, were even more dangerous to young millionaires than chorus girls; one could divorce a chorus girl, but radicalism seemed harder to put away from one. But as she read, the worried expression faded from her smooth forehead, and a little flush of color ran across her face.

"Oh, Jared!" she cried, and accused him with reproachful eyes. "Of course, I don't understand anything about business, but it does sound rather mean the way that Buck puts it. Was he that crippled old man Buck told me of when he came back, and she that awfully hard-working woman? And did your agents get it for a song?"

"The property has turned out unexpectedly valuable," stated Jared firmly. "Like almost every mining purchase, it was a pure gamble whether or not we would take out what we put into it. As for the actual price, it probably seemed princely to that necessitous couple."

"But Buck says," interrupted his wife, "that you had had the mines secretly tested before you made the offer."

"Buck, like most of the critics, hasn't troubled to get his facts straight. But a fact is a very small matter to a reformer."

"Then you didn't know that it would yield so much when you bought it for three thousand dollars? Oh, I do hope Buck will not take up with any faddy notions!"

"Oh," replied Jared, shrugging his shoulders, and allowing his face to resume its customary expression of pleasantly bland patronage of the world, "one must allow young fellows a few wild oats in the reforming line, I suppose, as well as in the others. We are dining at home to-night?"

"Yes; sixteen people. And we're going on to the opera afterward."

Mr. Mather nodded his acquiescence in the evening's program, and left the room. But as he drove to the big railroad directors' meeting for which he was booked that morning, he drew

Buck's letter from his pocket again, and perused it frowningly.

In due course of time, the Dalrymple sale at Christie's came off. For two or three days preceding it, the treasures were on exhibition, and connoisseurs and collectors walked among them, examining, appraising, criticizing. Mr. Jared Mather was one of those whose opinions were most eagerly sought, whose stray glances even were most intently followed. It was reported in type as large as that recording an outbreak in the Balkan states that he was expected to bid heavily for the great Dalrymple Rembrandt, and Englishmen were patriotically entreated, through the agitated press, not to allow this treasure to leave their own tight little island. As a matter of fact, Mr. Mather confided to his wife his doubt of the genuineness of the great Dalrymple Rembrandt.

"Dalrymple was no judge of a picture," he said. "We have half a dozen collections much finer than his. But his silver—there's nothing like it anywhere."

"I suppose that means," said Hortense, "that you're going to buy it?"

Her husband shook his head.

"There'll be too much competition, I'm afraid. It'll be pretty well scattered. But one thing I do intend to get, and that's the Carrylton Cup. Some day I shall be able to get my hands upon its mate, and then I'll have something truly unique as well as beautiful. Think what it means, my dear, that two such pieces have come down practically perfect nearly three hundred years! Think of all the chances they have survived—the robberies, the breakages, the meltings! And I've dug up a rather scandalous little bit of history about them which will enhance their value."

"How on earth did you manage that?" asked Hortense. Her husband was always amazing her with the diversity of his knowledge.

Jared laughed.

"I didn't do it personally," he said. "But a curious thing happened. Morrovitch was burrowing in the recesses

of some forgotten bookstore in Bristol, and he actually came upon two or three old diaries. They didn't seem very interesting, except for their antiquity; but he bought them on the safe principle that anything you can get cheap enough is worth buying. They had come out of a box in an old castle up there which was being cleared for the occupancy of some of our own compatriots. On looking them over, I found that two were quite dead in their dullness. I've had those printed already. But the third was the diary of an ancient spinster of the Carryl family, pretty dull, too, except for the hint of princely scandal it contained. I've had it photographed page by page, and the plate, as well as the original, are in the library safe. When I acquire both the Carrylton Cups I'll publish it."

"Was it anything very dreadful?" inquired his wife.

"Nothing so very astonishing. Merely another Charles the Second affair."

"How commonplace!" remarked the lady, with languid scorn.

But she overcame her scorn and her languor sufficiently to accompany him to the sale on the day when the Dalrymple silver was to be dispersed. She became almost excited when the bidding on the Carrylton Cup began, and she watched Morrovitch, her husband's agent, almost nervously as the price advanced steadily, almost monotonously, by the hundred guineas. Now it had reached the price for which Dalrymple had bought it—three thousand guineas. The head of a Berlin museum and a man from South Kensington were Morrovitch's chief opponents.

"And fifty," said the Berlin man, when the three-thousand-guinea mark had been reached.

"Thirty-one hundred," said the South Kensington man.

"Four thousand," Morrovitch's voice boomed resolutely through the excited room.

Again the two Europeans made their comparatively small additions upon the bid. Again the American's agent went to the thousand mark. Once more the same thing happened, but after

Morrovitch's "Six thousand guineas!" the other two were silent, and, with smiling nods toward Morrovitch, declared that they would bid no higher. The King's Carrylton Cup, described sonorously by the auctioneer as "that kingly gift of the most lavish of kings, that treasure equally of art and of history," became the property of Mr. Jared Mather.

Hortense felt a vague pleasure in her husband's pre-eminence as a collector. Ah, well, he could afford to compete with potentates and with nations for his caprice! Everything he touched turned to gold. That mine, for example, how it had justified his purchase of it! Hundreds of thousands of dollars each year it was yielding him, and he had bought it for three! She tried to banish a vague image of a hard-working woman in calico—Buck had told her about those people—and when the image proved persistent, like an importunate beggar, she repeated to herself what Jared had told her about the terrific expense of working a mine.

Well, when the time came for Jared to buy the other Carrylton Cup from those same strange people, he must pay a lot for it—as much as he had paid for this one in the Dalrymple collection. Thirty thousand dollars would mean a lot to them—fortunately the poor had so little taste for luxury!

And Mrs. Mather fingered the modest little string of pearls about her neck with the devout feeling that the world was a well-ordered place in which there were alleviations for all wrongs, compensations for all lack. It was fortunate that all women did not need twenty-five thousand-dollar necklaces! She hoped Buck would see it so.

But when Buck came over, he seemed in somewhat surly humor. He very



The sounds of "Muss ich denn, Muss ich denn," were booming lustily through the halls.

tiresomely insisted upon taking up the subject of the Roxanna Mine with his father. He demanded to know if the rumor which prevailed in Cloud Cap to the effect that he had had tested the vein as well as the product before making his offer had been true, choosing for his investigation the month the Carryls had gone to the nearest city boasting a hospital, that Jim might be treated. He showed dogged persistence in asking questions which the suave and practiced Jared found it difficult to answer with his accustomed air of brilliant tranquillity.

Mrs. Mather, regaled with some of the stories of her son's obstinacy and

pertinacity, became frightened about him; and then, instructed by her son as to the kindness and simplicity of the original owner of the Roxanna Mine, was vaguely oppressed by a feeling of unkindness. Hortense had great natural kindness, but it had been smothered almost to death under voluminous wrappings of ermine and sable, of lace and cloth of gold.

"Never mind, Buck," she said one day, when he had brought the tears to her eyes with the story of the young girl's studio shed, "never mind. We'll find her as soon as we go home, and your father will buy the other Carrylton Cup from them at such a price that they will be affluent all their days. Or, I'll tell you what we'll do." She changed the plan with an intuitive fear that she might not so easily accomplish her original one. "You and I will buy the Carrylton Cup, and will give it to your father for a present. Then there'll be no question about the price. We'll pay as much as he did for the Dalrymple cup," she ended, with a triumphant burst of generosity.

"They may not want to sell," said Buck gloomily. "The blooming cup means something to them beyond the ability to pay for it. They may not care to sell."

"Then, Buck," said his mother firmly, "they deserve to be poor. People who let sentiment come before their duty to their families deserve poverty. But I am sure that any one as nice as that funny mother sounded wouldn't be stuffy and queer like that. A mother's first instinct," Hortense ended piously, "is to do what is best for her children; and, of course, that girl should have proper training."

"That's all very well," growled her son; "but you forget that she could have had all the training in the world if her father had gotten a decent price for his property which *was* for sale—for his mine. I don't care what you say, mother, that was a dishonest performance."

"Buck!" exclaimed his mother reprovingly.

"Oh, I don't mean that father'll go to

jail, or that he's done anything illegal. He simply took advantage of a man's ignorance and helplessness and poverty—even of a man's hospitality. He would never have heard of the Roxanna if we hadn't been wrecked at Cloud Cap, and if those simple-hearted people had not been so good to us. Why, when I found the records of that transaction in the Chicago office, I came near going out there and doing something to make it up to them. I had forgotten all about them—the more shame to me!—but it all came back as vividly as possible. He simply didn't give them a square deal. In our day and generation, a fellow pretends not to expect too much white-robed nobility from his parents; but I can tell you it hurts to find your father capable of a skin game like that."

"Buchanan," said his mother solemnly, in the tone of one who means to do her serious duty in the world, "I'm terribly afraid you're turning out a radical."

And she darted an indignant glance at him as he threw back his head and broke into a ringing laugh.

CHAPTER IV.

Roxie was in a state of twittering excitement. The handicraft school was giving a reception that afternoon to its trustees, its patrons, and such of the public as was interested in its work. As is the fashion in more elementary schools, products of the labor of the pupils were on exhibition.

There were hand-woven mats and hand-woven baskets and hand-modeled bowls and candlesticks. There were hand-wrought spoons and forks made after old patterns, and there were marvels in handmade jewelry.

Roxie had the pleasing consciousness that her individual contribution to the display was by far the most notable in the school. It was a thought to fill her with delight, the proof that all those untutored strivings and all that untutored practice of hers in the old days at Cloud Cap had not been born of mere ambitious folly. She had talent; they all agreed to that—even those who were

unable to decide why their own talent was not as great.

Roxie had need of cheering reflections. Life had dealt none too kindly with her in the past year. The move upstairs at Mrs. Van Cleek's had not been enough to placate unkind destiny. Another move had been required, and the dishwasher was not yet upon the market.

Roxie had the pain of knowing that her father regarded her as solely responsible for his failure. Had not the kind and interesting young German made it perfectly evident that only the promise of her affection stood between Mr. Carryl and success? Of course, Mr. Carryl had said wistfully to his daughter, he had no desire to coerce her; he and her mother had always agreed that when Roxie's time came she should be free to choose for herself and to follow where her fancy led. Of course, he did not wish to go back upon that—he repudiated the notion with an effect of hot scorn; only—and then he drifted off into all the casuistries that are natural to middle age—was she quite sure that she knew her own mind? Did she have any ground except caprice for objecting to the round-faced, honest Mr. Adolph Wohlhaupt? He wouldn't coerce her for worlds, but was she quite sure that she understood what she wanted?

The days of fairy princes riding to the rescue of impoverished maidens immured in New York boarding houses were past; she must consider carefully if she was not letting a dream interfere with her happiness. As for the dishwashing machine, of course that was not to be thought of at all! And then he looked at her so hopefully, so pathetically, that it almost broke her heart.

Afterward Roxie could not have told just what it was that gave her the strength to withstand the wordless appeal in the old eyes that had looked on so many disappointments. But she had done it, and her father had submitted with a patience from which at last, it seemed to her, the perpetual hopefulness that had kept him young was pressed out.

He had acquiesced with the sorrowful indifference of the old in her plan for leaving even the top floor of Mrs. Van Cleek's. He had not questioned her declaration that it was embarrassing for her to meet the young German every day after her definite refusal of him. It was not among Mr. Wohlhaupt's virtues to display the delicacy which would have taken him away from the house.

When Roxie had finally settled them in a tiny tenement some of his old spirit began to return to him. It was a poor enough place—at first he had declared it to be quite impossible after the spurious dingy grandeurs of Mrs. Van Cleek's.

It was an apartment of the variety called "model," and it was bleak and forbidding enough at first sight to make one eschew all things model for life. The concrete halls, the bare concrete stairs seemed to him like a prison; but the three tiny rooms in which they were to live looked out across an acre of low roofs toward the sunset and the river, and these afforded the man from Cloud Cap a certain sense of companionship.

Moreover, from the cavernous depths of Roxie's trunk various homely things which Mrs. Van Cleek's furniture had almost succeeded in banishing from his recollection made their appearance—some bright Indian blankets, some jugs that had used to stand on the shelf in the cabin at Cloud Cap, and a big Indian basket.

Had it not been that Roxie, whose special work in the handicraft school was in metals, had succeeded in getting a few orders from jewelers for repairing fine jewelry, not even her ingenious thrift or hard work would have enabled them to live long on what they had left of their original capital. As it was, it was dwindling day by day. When she had finished her course she might be able to obtain regular work. Until then the odd jobs helped only a little.

It occasionally occurred to Jim that his daughter looked somewhat thin and pale, but he never guessed what a heavy burden of work and anxiety she was really bearing. All these causes made

her particularly elated over the showing of her work in the school exhibition. The older pupils had told her that all sorts of people came, that the most unexpected orders were sometimes the result of the little show. One great man, they told her, had only two years ago given a girl an order for rebinding so many of the books in his library that she was still at work upon it, and, indeed, seemed to have settled down into a sort of life job.

Roxie wondered if, after all, she had made a mistake not to take up book-binding. And then she was cheered by the story of the girl whose exquisite lacework had so impressed a lady of fashion that she had not only given the girl an order for a wonderful fan, but had afterward had her made the head of a lace-making class in a settlement. Oh, the possibilities were radiant—of that Roxie, shabby, thin, pale, shining-eyed, was convinced.

In spite of her quite evident poverty, in spite of the fact that she had declined all invitations from her fellows with the rigor of one unable to return even the simplest hospitality, she was rather popular in her class. The teachers liked her because she worked with such enthusiasm, such untiring faithfulness; the pupils because of the eager, wistful, friendly appeal that shone from her eyes and informed her whole manner with something warm and childlike. Two or three of the wealthy members of the group professed annoyance from time to time with what they termed her suicidal independence; but probably they liked her none the less for the pride that rejected all their offers of substantial benefit.

To-day she was one of the reception committee, detailed to pilot the guests from room to room of the school and tactfully instruct them in its worthiness to receive gifts and endowments. She had been obliged in the previous summer to replenish her wardrobe by the addition of a black-and-white summer silk made in shirt-waist style.

If Roxie had gone to parties, she would have worn this as her winter party gown; but as it was, it had not

been out of the closet since October. It possessed that marvelous quality of "style" which can subsist without any substantial merit. Roxie, painfully conscious of the size and precarious tenacity of the stitches, acutely aware of the slender threads by which hooks and eyes were fastened, was nevertheless aware, with a flush of pleasure, that she really "looked quite nice."

She had extracted some such admission from her father in the morning. He was again in the throes of his old enemy, inflammatory rheumatism, and his temper was a little uncertain. But his eyes had brightened at sight of the girl in her pitiful little finery, as she had arranged a table at his elbow with all the things which he would need before her return—his medicines and papers, the endless pile of correspondence about the washing machine, the kettle of broth to be warmed over the alcohol lamp, the tin of biscuits, the medicine glass, and spoon.

"Take good care of yourself until I come back," she had bidden, "and who knows but I'll bring in a fortune? Somebody will admire my work and will give me an order for hundreds of dollars worth, and will pay me—what do you call it?—a retaining fee so big that we can set out to-morrow morning for the Hot Springs for your rheumatism. And when we come back with you all cured there'll be a firm just crazy to market the machine for you, and—"

But her father had interrupted her.

"I guess the chance of any firm's wanting to do that has gone by," he reminded her. He had no wish to make her unhappy, but there were times when he was forced to permit himself an allusion to the lost possibilities bound up with Adolph Wohlhaupter. Then, at sight of the sudden fall of young happiness and hope in her face, he repented. "There, there, I didn't mean to bother you. Run along."

It was all vaguely in her mind as she went about her task of ushering and exhibiting and explaining—her father's hopes and ambitions, their constant thwarting, the creed of devotion to him in which she had been reared by her

mother, the wonder if she were indeed selfish and self-seeking in her refusal to help him. Then a healthy instinct of anger overcame the morbid questioning, of anger against the young man who dared to mix bargaining with his love-making, who sang German love songs and audited a ledger of the affections at the same time. It was not selfishness that refused to marry such a man, and it was the simple instinct of self-preservation, she told herself.

There had been a few moments' lull in the influx of guests. Roxie was free. The last lady had exclaimed prettily over the bookbinding and the brass-work, over the rugs and the basketry, over the reproductions of Georgian silver, and the chains and pendants of semiprecious stones. Roxie, steering her from the little exhibition gallery into the roof across the hall, had resigned her to the hospitable attentions of the tea squad, and, going back, had looked for some newcomer, standing about with a pseudo intelligent smile and an air of polite anxiety to know all about everything.

No such person presented himself at once, and she stood near the doorway, idly contemplating the scene. She was beginning to fear that the good fortune of which she had been half dreaming was not, after all, to be hers that day, when she heard the small Buttons on duty at the front door direct some one toward the exhibition gallery. In another second she was looking up into a middle-aged, astute, aquiline face which seemed vaguely familiar to her. A pleasant, cultivated voice was asking her where the head of the handicraft school was to be found. At the sound of those agreeable accents Roxie's memory framed a vision for her—the bare room of a cabin out between the desert and the timbered mountains, her father lying stretched in his invalid chair, and talking, talking with the garrulity of a man long without listeners.

"Oh, Mr. Mather!" she exclaimed.

The words escaped her without her volition. Jared, although accustomed to being recognized by many hundreds whom he did not know, was more flat-

tered than usual by the experience. He smiled encouragingly upon the girl—she seemed rather attractive in an unformed way—and made an admission of his identity.

"Yes," he said, "I am that unworthy person. I should have been here an hour ago. I told Mrs. Woolworth that I should be, but I was detained."

"It wasn't that," said Roxie, blushing. "I didn't know she was expecting you. It was just—"

She broke off, annoyed that her tongue had twisted her so in the mazes of explanation. Why should she have so stupidly called his name?

"It's just what?" asked Jared, smiling reassuringly upon her confusion.

Roxanna raised her wide brown eyes frankly to his.

"Of course you have forgotten," she said; "but you were wrecked once near Cloud Cap, and stayed a few hours at our cabin, talking to my father. He was Jim Carryl, and I am Roxie," she added desperately.

"The little sculptor!" cried Jared. "It was very dull of me not to recognize you at once. It is one of my vanities to think that I never forget faces. Indeed, I have not forgotten yours; I should have recognized it anywhere west of the Mississippi; but I was unprepared for it here. And so you've come East to get your training, after all? Your parents—are they with you?"

"My mother is dead," said Roxie softly. "She died a year after you were there. My father is here."

"I remember what a wonderful woman she was," said Jared sympathetically. "How sweet—how heroic. Is your father quite well? He was rather badly crippled, I remember, with rheumatism when I was there."

"He still is, poor dear," answered Roxie, sighing and smiling. "But you must let me find Mrs. Woolworth."

But Jared stopped her with an authoritative gesture.

"Not since I've found you," he declared. "It was a merely perfunctory visit from the president of Mrs. Woolworth's board of directors that I was



Gradually, piecemeal, they drew the story from him.

going to make. Now it's something much more personal."

He smiled at her with a look of ingratiating friendliness. Roxie felt the little flattered, fluttered sense of friendliness and intimacy which warier persons than she were accustomed to feel at Mr. Mather's good pleasure.

She took him about, showing him the work and conscientiously lingering long before that of the rest of the school because her heart was beating uncertainly with the hope that he would find special merit in hers when they reached it, and that something good would come of his appreciation.

And it was true that he seemed to take a particular interest in it when they came to it. He recalled the little brown

bear which she had modeled out in the studio in Cloud Cap, and the Indian papoose; and the girl was warmed by his praise and his kind, paternal air, as though by a draft of wine. He told her how often his son had spoken of the train wreck and of the hospitality which had followed it, and though the glance which he bent upon her through his glasses at that point was a searching one, there was no expression of consciousness on Roxie's pleased, wistful, hopefully shining face.

"Of course, I have often thought of him," she said simply, "for he was the first person from the outside world who took an interest in what I was doing. And I do not see many people, but he sees so many that it

would have been natural for him to forget."

"I do not think many who meet you will forget you, Miss Carryl," said Jared, with his quiet, authoritative air.

Roxie blushed at the flattery, but was not practiced enough to make any rejoinder.

"And the Carrylton Cup—has your father kept that all this time?" asked Jared casually.

He was looking at a pewter porringer as he spoke, and seemed more interested in that than in the whereabouts of the Carrylton Cup, for, without waiting for a reply, he began to comment upon the fidelity in color as well as in shape with which the old porringer model had been followed. Roxie sighed.

"I was crazy to do it in silver," she said, "but, as you know, we supply our own materials. That is why I copied even the spoons in pewter."

Jared said something official about the necessity of a fund for materials, and then he reverted to the Carrylton Cup.

"Oh, yes," answered Roxie, "father still has it."

"I don't wonder that he clings to it; it is a beautiful piece. I wonder if I might come some afternoon and have another glimpse of it?"

"I'm sure he would be very happy to see you, and, of course, very glad to show you the cup. But I hope," Roxie added anxiously, "that you won't try to tempt him to sell it. It has come to excite him a good deal even to think of that. You see," she looked at him with her honest, appealing eyes, "I think he sometimes reproaches himself for not having taken your offer when mother was alive, and the money might have helped her."

"I shall not say a word to disturb or excite him," Jared promised her. "I do want to see the cup again very much, but I won't even ask for that privilege if you think it would agitate your father. I want to come, anyway, to see him. I owe him a debt of hospitality ever since the wreck."

And then Mrs. Woolworth appeared, and Roxie immediately gained new standing with her because Jared Mather claimed her as an old friend.

And Roxie went home to the model tenement in a rosy glow of hope. Surely, she told herself, there could be nothing alarming to even the most sensitive independence in an offer, say, from Mr. Mather to market her father's invention. That was the most practical way she saw for the payment of the debt of hospitality to which the great man referred. That would not be a charity—merely an investment. And she felt quite convinced that something worth while would come out of the day's meeting.

She even stopped, on the strength of it, to buy two chops for her father's dinner. Chops were almost prohibi-

tively dear, but with a friend and patron like Jared Mather, surely one could afford them once in a blue moon. How simple and kind he was in spite of his wealth and power! Probably all great people—all truly great people—were like that. And how kind of him to tell her that his son still remembered her.

Roxie was not worldly-wise, but she instinctively knew that elderly millionaires do not usually let penniless little arts-and-crafts students know of the interest of young millionaires. He had been very kind, that good-looking boy, very kind and pleasantly compelling that long afternoon and that cool evening back there in Cloud Cap. Strange that she should have heard of him again—strangely and surely propitious.

She ran up the concrete stairs of the model tenement more lightly and gayly than she was accustomed to. And as her hand fumbled with the latchkey she was suddenly stricken into a tense pause. From the other side of the door came the heavy sound of groans.

When she had forced herself to enter, she found her father half fallen upon a lounge near the door, half lying on the floor. With a cry, she ran to him. Even in the emaciation of illness and suffering, he was a heavy man, and she could not lift him unaided. She ran back into the hall, and called for help.

In a few minutes it seemed that the entire population of the house, half the population of the block, and several policemen were crowding into the tiny place. They had laid her father on the bed, and had telephoned for a physician. Until he arrived and restored the stricken man to consciousness nothing could be learned.

Various of the neighbor women had conflicting stories to tell of strange characters seen lurking in the halls, and of strange sounds heard at different hours. But, as there was no uniformity in these tales, the police were inclined to be skeptical concerning them. In a few minutes a physician from a neighboring street came in, and, clearing the room of all who had no business in it,

much to the disgust of the neighbors, proceeded to work over Jim Carryl. When he was restored to consciousness, and his eyes rested upon his daughter, a look of relief overspread his face. His first word was her name, and then he said:

"Where is he?"

Gradually, piecemeal, they drew the story from him. Early in the afternoon the hall door had opened. He had not been surprised, for Roxie had made an arrangement with the janitress whereby that kind and efficient female was provided with a key to their apartment in order that she might look in upon Mr. Carryl during his daughter's absence at school. He had glanced up at sound of the opening door, and had prepared to greet this woman; but it was an unknown man, young, burly, a typical tough, who came forward out of the little hall. The invalid had tried to rise from his chair, but had been pushed back too roughly by the intruder, who had fiercely told him to hand out his money.

"Money!" cried Roxie, at this point. "But you haven't any!"

Her father groaned again, and averted his eyes from his daughter's. Her heart stood still with fright. Had the thief gotten the cup? She did not dare to put the question. But it appeared that she was mistaken in regard to her father's finances; he had drawn almost all of what remained to him from the bank just before the present attack of rheumatism had crippled him. He wanted to have it by him, he explained, in order to complete some foolish secret arrangement he was making in regard to the dishwasher. Mutely his eyes besought Roxie's forgiveness. She stooped above him, and lightly kissed his forehead.

"There, there, dear," she said soothingly, as though to a child, and his fingers tightened gratefully upon hers.

But who was the intruder? Who besides Jim Carryl and the other poor, harebrained inventor with whom he was dickering knew that he had drawn the money?

And then the weeping janitress let

forth the explanation. Sure, Mr. Carryl had told herself of it, and had shown her where in the mattress of the couch he had ripped the seam to make a hiding place for his money. And sure she, thinking no harm, had lamented to her own old man, down in their basement quarters, that Mr. Carryl should be so foolish. "You never know who's going around these days," she reported herself as having said to her husband.

And that she spoke the truth was sufficiently attested by the fact that her own nephew, recently out of Elmira, had been making an unheralded visit in her kitchen at that very moment, and had overheard her misgivings and her lamentations about the old gentleman upstairs. The description of the thief exactly tallied with her nephew. She could even tell the police where and with whom the boy was probably now spending the money. She wept heart-brokenly with family shame and with pity for the Carryls. And she was right concerning the whereabouts of the young ruffian.

It happened to be the sort of story which made an excellent newspaper appeal. An inventor, his ambitious and talented young daughter, a background of the West, with mines and cowboys and dangers, a model tenement, a "crime wave"—these and a rather dull day in the news-making centers of the world combined to make poor Jim Carryl's loss a headliner. It even gave one or two editors, at temporary loss for opportunity to show their sapience, a topic for editorial discussion: "Do Our Reformatories Reform?" But chiefly it brought Buchanan Mather to the model tenement the next day.

Roxie had not gone to the school, but had stayed at home, attending to her father, who had been considerably damaged by his encounter with the young robber, and answering the questions which the detectives put to her with something the air of believing her to be an accomplice in the crime, at least.

But she lived too far from the street both in height and in horizontal position to hear the "chug, chug" of the black

touring car in which Buck had elected to make his visit. When the rap that announced him sounded on the door she went, expecting to find another detective demanding impossible information, or a neighbor bearing some strange delicacy for her father, and bursting to talk the whole matter over. For a moment when she had flung open the door she peered into the semidarkness of the hall without recognizing Buck. But as soon as he spoke she knew him.

"Oh, come in, Mr. Mather!" she cried; and there was a joyous note in her flutelike voice. "Your father told you, then?"

"My father?" Buck's manner was puzzled. He was still shaking hands with her heartily, and seemed likely to continue the process all the way into the room, where Jared lay upon the couch. "No. Does he know that you are here?"

Roxie explained her yesterday's meeting with the elder Mr. Mather, and recalled to her father's memory the younger one.

"No, I don't think I've seen my father for two or three days," said Buck lightly. "It was the newspapers that gave you away. How does it feel to be a perfectly virtuous headliner? I've never been one, except for breaking up a show in New Haven and exceeding the speed limit. I thought you had solemnly promised to let me know when you came to New York?"

"I think I promised to let you know when our ship came in and we came to New York. It didn't come with flying sails, although dad did get rid of the Roxanna Mine."

Roxie wondered a little at the sudden fall of Buck's features when she spoke.

"I had forgotten it was a promise with a string to it," he said, failing to force again the air of exuberant cheer and friendliness with which he had entered.

And then he bent over Jim, and began asking him solicitous questions about his health. What doctor had they had? Was his examination thorough, and had

they not better allow him—Mr. Buchanan Mather—to send the Mather family physician? Oh, it was chiefly inflammatory rheumatism, was it, that prostrated Mr. Carryl, and yesterday's attack was merely a trifle compared with the original trouble? And then Buck hated himself, as, having uttered a few words on the advisability of treatment at the Hot Springs, his eyes took in the whole story of poverty and hardship which the neat little rooms told, and he realized the banality of his suggestion. He hurried on to cover that mistake with a happier suggestion.

"Have you still that wonderful christening cup you showed us when we were out in your country?" he asked. He simply had to find a reason for offering them money! Roxie glanced nervously at her father, and a flush mounted Jim's cheek bones. Mindless of both these indications, Buck pursued cheerfully: "My father has acquired its twin, you know."

"No," Roxie nervously interjected, "we didn't know."

She tried by her glance to warn him not to go on, but Buck, in his anxiety to right certain wrongs of which he knew, was not to be stayed. He told them eagerly how the Dalrymple collection had been sold the previous summer, and how the King's Cup now formed part of the treasure of his father. He told them joyously, expectantly, the price his father had paid for it—six thousand guineas.

"And my mother and I," pursued Buck, advancing radiantly toward his climax, "want to surprise him with a gift of its twin, your Carrylton Cup. We'll give you the same price for it—or even more," he rushed on excitedly. "Of course," he added, with a practical air, "a perfect pair of anything is always worth more than twice as much as each perfect half."

"My cup is not for sale!" snapped Jim Carryl from his pillows.

He looked grim as he spoke. There was a feverish light in his eyes, a feverish color spotted the invalid's pallor of his gaunt, lined old face. His sparse gray hair needed trimming, and added

to the fanatic appearance which he presented.

Roxie laid her slim hand, still faintly brown from the long years of outdoor life under clear skies, on his forehead, while she endeavored to soften the asperity of his refusal.

Buck was not altogether surprised. He had felt that there were possibilities of high-minded folly about that old man and about the girl in the one evening he had had with them. Deep within him, something responded to their unworldliness with a faint throb of admiration and sympathy, even while his educated reason was calling them fools, and his sense of justice was impatiently demanding to know how, if they took this stand, he was ever to make up to them for his father's sharp practice in the Roxanna Mine deal.

"I understand how you feel, of course," he said, a little slowly. "I suppose it does seem an outrageous piece of impertinence for a man without any heirlooms of his own to come trying to acquire those of more fortunate people by mere jingle of coin. But," he looked hopelessly about the room, "you do seem to need—that is, I mean to say——"

"The cup is not for sale at any price," declared Jim, burrowing his head deeper back into his pillows, and closing his eyes, to indicate unmistakably that the conversation was over.

Buchanan flushed a little indignantly. After all, he hadn't come to this queer old party seeking a favor, looking for a job. They might go to blazes—the impractical pair of them—for all of him. And then he caught Roxie's eyes fixed upon him with so poignant an expression of apology and of gratitude that he immediately forgave her father's rudeness.

"I'm afraid I'm tiring Mr. Carryl out," he said politely. "Have you been out of doors to-day, Miss Carryl? No? Won't you bundle up and let me take you for a spin through the park? The air is delicious, and you ought to have it. You're losing that Western color I remember."

Jim opened his offended eyes, and all

the offense was gone from them. Eagerly he commanded Roxie's acceptance of the offer. She did need the outing, he said. She worked too hard, she stayed indoors too much, and Mr. Mather would be very kind to take her out for a breath of fresh air.

Buck remembered the plain, hard-working woman with the friendly eyes out at Cloud Cap, who had been so glad because of the few hours of young companionship which fate had thrown her daughter. How they all cared for one another, those people; how close knit were their affections, their hopes, and their ambitions! He had a sudden faint, undefined sense of being himself lonely, almost orphaned, almost an outcast. What common hope did his father, his mother, and himself share? Not one. All their interests, their passions, their dreams not only diverse, but unrevealed to one another! And it was so in all the families that he knew intimately. He had a moment's great perception of the fact that wealth builds barriers not only between different classes in the world, but around the very hearthstone.

As he and Roxie sped round the park she sought to apologize for her father's curtness about the Carrylton Cup. And to do that adequately she thought it necessary to explain about her mother's illness, and about the last harassed, poverty-stricken days at Cloud Cap. She told of the sale of the mine, and Buck, by guarded inquiries, gathered that she knew neither the name of the real purchaser, which was, indeed, almost impenetrably concealed in a list of directors of the holding company, nor the immense profit at which the mine was now worked.

And yet he half wished that she might learn of the guile practiced upon her father, and might be stirred to resentment, to a demand for some sort of recompense—to any course, in short, which would enable him, Mr. Buchanan Mather, to bestow a modest competency upon her without defying the usual rules of conventional society for the financial relation of young men and women.

Well, there was one thing which he

could do. He could place a car at her disposal; he could offer himself as an occasional chauffeur; he could develop great resourcefulness in the matter of proper diet for invalids.

These things he did until Roxie, in laughing despair, begged him to desist. She pointed out to him that the resources of a three-room model tenement are not those of a modern hospital, and that her shelves would positively hold no more calf's-foot jelly, health biscuits, or specially prepared invalid's broths. And Buchanan promised to give her a chance to catch up with her larder, but gave the promise with such a lugubrious air that she could not but laugh, although life in these days was no laughing matter for her.

There were several reasons why Buchanan did not take his parents into his confidence as to his negotiations for the Carrylton Cup. In the first place, he was very distinctly of the belief that his father would regard him as an impertinent meddler; in the second place, his mother was at Palm Beach, and had doubtless forgotten all about the impulse which had moved her to declare, in London, that she would pay so highly for the treasure.

He saw his father seldom, at best, and when they did happen to meet he waited, with a curiosity of whose hostile quality he was aware, for the older man to mention having again met the little sculptor of Cloud Cap. But so far as his son was able to observe, the incident had entirely faded from Mr. Mather's much occupied mind; and he had not read that vulgar tenement-house item in the newspapers which might have fixed it for him. Buck had decided that he had, indeed, forgotten all about it, when one day he was enlightened by Roxie.

He was driving her slowly through Bronx Park. It was one of those days in late winter that reassure the inhabitants of the North as to the possibility of summer. The air was soft; the imagination could almost clothe the bare branches of the trees with the first faint flush of green; the little patches of

snow, smoky and grimy, left on the northern sides of rocks, all seemed to be melting.

Buck, on his way to the Carryl abode, had been moved by the rising spring within him to stop at a florist's; and he came laden with white lilacs and yellow jonquils—enough to decorate a state ballroom, and far beyond the vase capacity of his recipient's home. She had divided her lovely spoils among her neighbors, carrying the best, as he noted, with a sense of personal pride, to the poor, remorseful janitress. But there had been a reservation in her gratitude. It had not been merely a humorous, protesting air such as she had adopted about the jellies, but was chilly, warning him that he must not make her such inappropriately lavish gifts.

Yet, as they motored through the park, he rejoiced to see that she carried the bunch of violets which he had included with personal intention in the great impersonal mass of his offering. He smiled comfortably to himself as she lifted them to her face from time to time. Despite that delicately austere air of dignity which she wore, and which worried him like a threat that their acquaintance must be an ephemeral one, she was carrying his flowers.

A great many girls had carried Mr. Buck Mather's flowers before this time, and with a much more conscious and intentional air; but he had never had the same sense of triumph in the fact. He had watched, too, more exquisite profiles than the girlishly lovely one upon which he looked now; but he had never taken the same pleasure in any as in this, with its virginal curve of cheek and temple, and its wistful line of mouth.

Suddenly awaking to a realization of his æsthetic pleasure, a new and startling thought flashed into the young man's mind. Was it possible that he was falling in love with the girl? His first sensation was one of warmth and dazzling brightness. But swiftly upon it followed chill misgiving. What an awful rumpus that would make! How enraged his father would be! How contrary, indeed, to all Buck's own idle

sketches of his future would such a marriage be! But then, of course, even if it were true—even if all this pleasant glow did mean that he was beginning to care for her, perhaps she wouldn't care for him!

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Buchanan Mather's robust conceit to his just-born modesty. "Nonsense! There's nothing the matter with you, is there? You're a presentable enough person. You've got money. You've got some education—not a highbrow sort, of course, but what girl would want that? You're going to have plenty of money, aren't you? What more would a girl expect? Besides, what better men has she had a chance to see?"

And immediately the retina of Buck's mental vision was peopled with a dashing cavalcade of cowboys and miners.

He was about to ask her gloomily if there had been much social life in the neighborhood of Cloud Cap when she turned toward him, and said, with a curious little smile:

"Your father came to see me yesterday afternoon."

"My father!" Buck stared at her. "Why, what did he want? I mean—oh, yes! You said you had seen him at your school the day before the robbery. Of course, he naturally wanted to call on your father," Buck concluded, with a very creditable imitation of an ordinary conventional manner.

"Yes, he wanted to call upon father. Fortunately I met him in the hall outside, and I was able to warn him against speaking of the Carrylton Cup. He wanted to make an offer for that, too, but father had had an abominable night, and I could not allow him to be excited. So your father merely made him a little visit." Buchanan was immensely relieved to hear it, but Roxie, watching him with curious, speculative eyes, added: "He left his offer for the cup with me, though."

"Oh!" Buck's voice was rather blank. Then he rallied his forces beneath the almost quizzical glance she was bending upon him. "May I ask what my competitor's offer was?"

"Six thousand dollars." Roxie's

voice was crisp, her smile pleasant, and Buchanan blushed furiously for his parent. "He did not mention," pursued Roxie, in the same agreeable voice, "that he had bought the other cup from the—whose sale did you say it was?"

"The Dalrymple sale," replied Buck automatically. They were both silent for a moment. Then he laughed with attempted lightness. "You turned him down scornfully, of course, telling him how much you had already refused for it?"

"I didn't say anything about the other offer," answered Roxie quietly. "I thought what you wished him to know about your offer you would probably tell him yourself. The cup is not for sale, and I couldn't see the sense in talking about it. I shan't," she added, turning her full gaze upon him, "ever tell him anything about your offer—and your mother's."

"Roxie, you're a trump!" Buck spoke her name unconsciously, but became aware of his transgression when he saw the bright flood of color overspread her face. "Forgive me; I didn't mean to be presumptuous, but that's the way I think of you, you know. And it was uncommonly nice of you not to show my bargain-hunting parent that you were fully aware of the value of your treasure. I'll let him know it myself."

"Of course, I have nothing to do with that," answered Roxie. "And now I think we had better be turning back to the city. I have been gone a long time."

The drive home seemed to Buck less springlike than the drive out. Winter had come back into the air, the starting sap was frozen in the trees, the world was altogether a less friendly place than it had been before, and all because the quiet girl beside him knew that his father was a mean man. How would it seem if she knew the truth about the mine?

CHAPTER V.

It was a month later. Mrs. Mather had returned from Palm Beach, and was preparing to go immediately to some other quarter of the globe comfortably



"I am surprised that a man could be found mean enough to take advantage of her inexperience."

distant from Manhattan Island. Mr. Mather had been West and South, had sat in important directors' meetings, had been interviewed on questions of public policy, of art and literature, had presided with dignity at a great meeting to raise funds for the education of Southern mountaineers, had headed the list of subscriptions with one for ten thousand dollars, which set a pace for his fellow millionaires similarly addicted to good works, and had altogether played an imposing part in the affairs of the imposing world.

Mr. Buchanan Mather had refrained from attending two or three automobile and one aviation meet, much to the surprise of the friends who knew his interests in these sports. Even his father had considered his devotion to duty in the shape of the New York office a little extreme.

One morning an unusual and almost unprecedented thing happened: The three members of the Mather family met at the breakfast table. Mrs. Mather came wearing her jacket and hat, and

explaining that an early-morning appointment at the dressmaker's was responsible for her appearance. Her husband congratulated himself with elaborate playfulness on the lady's presence.

"Your father has just put through some deal or other," said Mrs. Mather, attacking grapefruit with a business-like air. "I can always tell. You're really exactly like the cat who has eaten the canary when you've put through anything, Jared. What is it this time?"

Jared laughed his appreciation of his wife's astuteness.

"It's no deal this time," he said. "No business deal, that is to say; but"—he paused, and looked at them, smiling to accentuate his dramatic climax—"I've bought the other Carrylton Cup."

"What!" cried Buck, while his mother murmured: "Oh, dear! I forgot all about it—Buck and I were going to give you that for a present."

"How did you get the cup, sir?" demanded Buck, with sternness.

His father looked at him in amazement.

"Your interest seems almost belligerent," he answered, settling his glasses more firmly on his nose, and favoring his son with a sharp scrutiny. "It was very kind of you and your mother to design it as a present for me, and perhaps I should be sorry to forestall you; but that scarcely accounts for your manner."

"Have you any objection to telling me how you got the cup?" Buck insisted.

His father changed color; something like a rusty blush overspread his countenance.

"As it happens, I have. That is, Miss Carryl would have a particular objection to my telling how I came to buy the cup."

"Well, do you mind telling how much you paid for it?"

Buck fired the objectionable question in a very objectionable manner. His father stared at him with an air of cool, disapproving surprise.

"I see no particular objection to telling you that," he said. "I am to give eight thousand dollars for the cup. I have not received it yet."

"I should like very much to know," snapped his son, with a tightening of his jaw muscles and a dangerous gleam in his eyes, "how you persuaded Miss Carryl to accept eight thousand dollars for something for which I had already offered her thirty and more."

It was Jared Mather's turn to be astonished; but he had had longer practice than his son in accepting shocks without facial and vocal perturbation. So he merely studied the tense, white, scornful young face at the side of the table, and replied, in his suavest tones:

"Ah, then you have met the young lady since she has been in New York?"

"I have," answered Buck briefly.

His mother looked at him, worried, confused.

"But it is strange, isn't it," she said, trying to inject some soothing quality into the situation, "that she should have taken so much less from you than Buck offered her?"

"Perhaps she did not realize that Buck's offer was always open," said

Jared. "She may merely have bewailed it as a lost opportunity, and have availed herself of the next best one."

"Nonsense!" said Buck vigorously. "She knew perfectly well that my offer was open at any time—she must have known it. The only reason I haven't made it every week was because I thought she knew her own mind."

"You are very young," said his father, with benignant pity. "When you are a little more experienced you will know that a woman never knows her own mind, and the knowledge will help you a great deal. But you said something about repeating your offer every week—do I understand that you have been seeing Miss Carryl every week?"

"Often than that," Buck defied him. "Much oftener."

"Ah! And in spite of the frequency of your visits, your relations with Miss Carryl are not so close—so confidential"—he amended his phrase—that you knew of her change of mind? Really, Buck, you are not at all an enterprising youth."

There was covert insult in his father's voice. Buchanan looked at him steadily.

"I am not enterprising enough to take advantage of a girl's need or ignorance, even in the matter of money," he answered gravely.

The reply goaded his father into one of his infrequent exhibitions of impulse.

"Perhaps you are in love with the young lady—honorably in love with her?"

Hortense smothered an exclamation of horror, and gazed at her son, waiting his refutation of such a charge.

Buchanan replied in the same even voice:

"Perhaps I am."

"And have you declared your affection and your honorable intentions, sir?" demanded his father, with repressed anger, while Hortense's "Oh, no, no, Buck!" still lingered on the air.

Buck pushed back his chair, and rose.

"I have not. You said that perhaps I was honorably in love with her. I answered that perhaps I was; it is not a subject on which I have thought a great deal. I know that neither I nor

any other man could be dishonorably in love with her—she does not invite that kind of attention. I am surprised that a man could be found mean enough to take advantage of her inexperience even in the matter of money——”

“I have always said,” interrupted Hortense determinedly, breaking into the irate conversation, “that a family breakfast table is the rudest place in the world, and that no human being is fit to meet another until after coffee. You and your father are proving it this morning, Buck. Now do, for pity’s sake, for my sake—for any sake—stop! Talk it over at dinner—or, better still, after dinner. Doubtless, my dear boy, the girl thought your offer an extravagant one, a mere cloak for charity, and very properly refused it on that account; while your father’s offer she accepted as a sane and reasonable business one. Of course, your father and you both spoke hastily just now when you talked about your being in love with her—I know that that’s nonsense. And I’m off to the dressmaker’s now. Jared, you’d better let me give you a lift downtown.”

“Your mother’s right, as usual,” said Jared, rising. “We shall be able to talk this over more reasonably later, if, indeed, there is anything to talk over. You understand that my transaction with Miss Carryl about the cup is a secret one? Carryl himself is perfectly unreasonable, and would be likely to die of starvation because of his mulish obstinacy, if he were alone. The girl had to take the matter into her own hands in her care for him. Our arrangement—hers and mine—must be secret for the time being. I assure you that she does not regard me as a wretch.”

He looked at his son with the air of a man who expects to be met halfway in a graceful and conciliatory course; but Buck’s face gave no evidence of any appreciative feeling. Jared shrugged his shoulders, and followed his wife from the room.

“I shall send that young fool to London to represent us in the transatlantic freight matter,” he told Hortense, as

he stepped into her limousine. “He’ll have to sail to-morrow. I was sending Whiteley, but this would be an excellent time to keep Buck out of the country.”

“Is the girl pretty?” asked Hortense anxiously.

“No. Nice-looking, though; has an air of purity and pride—of lineage. But without an atom of fascination, I should say. And Buck’s fancies have always been for the fascinator, haven’t they?”

Hortense sighed.

“Love is so different from fancy,” she said; and was a little surprised at the wisdom of her own observation.

Meantime, Buck smoked, and thought hard. In the first place, the King’s Carylton Cup was not Roxie’s to sell. She could dispose of it only by deceiving her father. And she was not made for deceit; of that he was sure.

Of course, women were tortuously minded creatures; they were always able to twist things about so that the fact was not the truth, and that plain two and two no longer made four. She might have decided to lie to her father, to deceive him for his own good, for his own health—perhaps for his own life. She was the kind of woman who would take a stain upon her own soul, such as he instinctively knew she would feel a lie to be, for the sake of the good to one she loved.

But—even then, even granting that she, guided by his father, had been able to compile a story which would satisfy Jim Carryl, why had she taken so small a sum for the cup? She had Jared Mather practically at her mercy, since he desired the treasure so much; she knew what he had given for its twin; she was able to flaunt another bona-fide offer in his face. She could certainly have held him up for the whole amount that Buck had already offered for himself and his mother. Instead, she had let the heirloom go for a quarter of what she would have been able to command for it. Again his father had robbed her—it was thus that Buck bitterly reasoned. But why had she permitted it? He would go and find out.

He walked across the park, and up

beside it, and beyond, until he reached the street on which the Carryls' flat was. He struck down toward the river. He had felt the need of exercise to banish the anger, the gloom, the baffled sense of being enmeshed, which he had had in the early morning. As the blood began to course more healthfully through his veins he remembered, with a half-warm, half-amused feeling, his father's taunt about his affections. Was he in love with the girl? It would be easy to fall in love with her, he was sure. Perhaps, after all, that would be the solution of the whole difficulty. Perhaps he and she would marry, and the cup would belong to them both, and the mine, and—

There was a taxi before the model tenement house. Buck thought he recognized the slender figure that disappeared into it. He quickened his pace; he broke into a run as the door of the machine was slammed, and as it started down the street away from him. But it flashed around the corner beyond before he had even reached the door.

Mrs. Denny, the janitress, stood in the hallway, checked apron at her eyes.

"Oh, is it yerself, sir?" she cried, as Buck entered breathlessly.

"Was that—is Miss Carryl upstairs, do you know?" he asked, panting a little from his race with the taxi.

The janitress dropped her apron to stare at him amazed.

"Well, I made certain it 'u'd be yerself that would know all about it," she explained. "I made certain Miss Carryl would let you know, sudden as it all was, an' you an' her such friends!"

"What was sudden?" demanded Buck. His sensation was that of a man bereft, frightened. He saw the cavalcade of Western suitors—he saw chance depriving him of Roxie—he saw Roxie herself conniving with chance, encouraging the Western cavalcade; the dilettante's attitude from which he had been surveying and sounding his own emotions was swept from beneath him. It was real, the desire for her; it was alive, throbbing with life and pain, the love he had thought still in embryo.

"Sure, she's taken her father away

for his health! She had some money all of a sudden—"

"Where has she taken him?" demanded Buchanan roughly.

"She'll send me the address when she gets there," replied Mrs. Denny importantly. "She's not right sure of her destination herself. She couldn't say where she was going—sure, this place might be too crowded for him, an' that place might be too far for him to thravel in his wake condition. But she'll let me hear. Ah, Mr. Mather, did you ever hear of her likes, unless maybe it was an angel out of heaven? Her bein' that good an' kind to me wid niver a word of blame for the way me ramblin' tongue brought harm to her an' hers. You'll look far before you'll look upon her like."

Buck agreed quite heartily with Mrs. Denny's estimate of the late tenant, but he craved more accurate information. As Mrs. Denny's "ramblin' tongue" stated it afterward to her husband:

"Sure, he asked me as many questions as thim detectives the day after Con stole the money. Did I think she would be goin' back where she come from? Did I think she would be takin' her father South? Or to Europe, now—there was fine baths to be had over there, he said, for the curin' of rheumatiz. An' over an' over again I told him that I don't know anything more thin I've said already. She come into some money sudden like, an' she took her father away to be cured of that torturin', twistin' rheumatiz. An' she'll let me know where she is whin she gets there. Mark my words, Neill—there'll be a match there one of these days."

Neill, whose forte was silence, but whose grunts were extremely eloquent, gave one now indicating the following things: That Miss Carryl undoubtedly knew her own business, that her destination would be wisely chosen, that Mr. Mather's interest in her was undeniable, but that there was no putting of much confidence in the interest which the young sons of millionaires had to bestow upon the inhabitants of model tenements.

And Mrs. Denny, acknowledging the truth of all that the portentous grunt implied, nodded her head sagely, and said:

"True for you, Neill."

Meantime, Buchanan proceeded to upset his father's plans by some swift movements of his own. With the mental picture of the Western suitors in his mind, he decided that Roxie had probably taken her invalid back to Cloud Cap. Well, he would follow. He would tell her that he loved her, that he had loved her ever since the day he first saw her on her Western pony, framed in the doorway of the cabin, with the dim stretch of desert and the blue sky for a background behind her.

At the moment Buck was quite convinced that he would be speaking the truth when he should make this statement to Roxie. What but her image, unconsciously carried in his heart, had enabled him to move unscathed before batteries of bright glances for so many years?

Roxie's flight, in short, had had the not infrequent effect of feminine withdrawal upon masculine emotions—it had crystallized into something definite, tangible, real, a mass of inchoate feelings; it had converted a fancy, an attraction into love. Roxie present, however charming, was merely the delightful girl with whom he might some day fall in love if he gave rein to certain thrilling but half-formed impulses; the girl badly treated by his own family, and therefore deserving especial regard and recompense from him. But Roxie in flight was some one to be pursued, captured, won.

He was unable to reach his father to tell him of his intentions. In his new ardor and determination, he felt that he could not waste a day or an hour. He must start West at once. So he merely left a brief but definite note for Jared, and a less brief, less definite one for his mother, and started to Chicago. The elder man's plans for heading him toward Europe the next day were thus defeated, and young Mr. Whiteley's countermanded trip was again ordered.

And meantime Jared's brow was

black with wrath. He was not, however, a man of impulsive action. If he had believed the danger imminent with which Buck threatened him—the danger of his finding Roxie and marrying her out of hand—he was quite capable of telegraphing Buck that he was disinherited, discharged, and generally read out of the family. But, although he was now in some doubt as to Roxie herself, in some perplexity as to her motives and intentions, nevertheless, he had reason for believing that Buck would not immediately find her.

"And by the time he does," he said, "he will probably have returned to his senses. It is from you he gets this quixotic streak, Hortense; it's all very attractive in a woman, but it plays the deuce with a man unless he learns to keep it under control. Well, we shall see what we shall see. If that sly little puss counted on anything of this sort, she completely deceived me as to her character. And I can scarcely believe that possible."

"No, it's not likely," answered his wife. "You've had a good deal of experience with our sex."

Jared darted a swift look at her.

"You, my dear," he replied, with a bow, "are a creature of such infinite variety that you have been a liberal education to me in feminine possibilities."

Hortense received the remark with a vague, chilly little smile and a faint shrug of her shoulders.

"I wish I'd seen the girl myself," she said. "I should have known what sort she really was, whether she's been playing for Buck himself, instead of merely the sale of the cup. You can't deceive a woman about another woman—especially you can't deceive a mother about the woman her son is interested in," she added piously. Then she went on: "I wish you would tell me more about how she came to sell you the cup. Why must it be secret? Why haven't you received it yet? Why aren't you going to advertise the fact of your possession as soon as you receive it?"

"The answer to all your questions is one," replied Jared. "Legally the cup is not hers to dispose of, although prac-

tically and morally it is. It will descend to her when her father dies, and that will be before long. The disease is creeping toward his heart. I had Blake examine him. She will own the cup in, let us say, a year—six months, maybe. She is willing to let me have it at once in order that her father may have the comforts he requires until he dies. But naturally I cannot announce my purchase yet. He has a fanatical objection to the thought of parting with it."

"I see," sighed Hortense. "I do wish they hadn't had to do it. If only they had gotten more money out of their mine!"

Jared frowned impatiently upon her. "If they had," he told her briefly, "it would simply have meant more money for him to throw away on his worthless inventions. It wouldn't have made an iota of difference in their actual financial condition to-day. And I hope, Hortense, that I have heard the last about the Roxanna Mine. Business is not run on a sentimental basis."

"Except," said the lady, a little sadly, "when a woman has something to sell. Then sentiment does seem to govern business, doesn't it, Jared?"

Jared laughed, and kissed his wife's white hand.

"A thrust, a thrust, my dear," he admitted. "Women do sometimes sell their treasures for something other than the market value."

And so, with a little verbal sparring, Roxanna and her heirloom and her intentions and her motives were dismissed from the elder Mathers' minds. Of course, they had their anxieties about Buck; but, after all, even one's only son may not be permitted to obstruct one's entire mental horizon if one is a personage in the world of fashion or the world of finance.

They were not so old yet, either of them, that life was expressed only in terms of their child's interest. Jared felt himself powerful to manipulate affairs for many years to come. He looked from his early fifties toward a robust three score and ten, his finger always on the pulse of the times, his

word always pregnant with authority. He hoped Buck would not make a fool of himself, of course; but, after all, he was more interested in himself and his plans than in Buck and his.

Buck, disgruntled, sullen, had returned from Cloud Cap no better off than when he had set out for that spot. He had found a flourishing mining settlement which had been like a thorn in his flesh, but no trace of Roxie. Then he had vigorously berated himself. Why had he been such a dolt as to imagine that she would bring her father back here? Had it not been here that the man was first stricken, first crippled? He took the earliest train back, and spent the three days of the journey in calling himself unflattering names.

Once in New York again, his first visit had been to Mrs. Denny, but if Mrs. Denny had heard from her late lodger she managed to conceal the fact. Buck had the impression that she had heard, in spite of the volubility with which she declared her amazement that Miss Carryl could have neglected her so. Roxie had probably commanded her not to give him her address. Why? he wondered. And then his mind was off upon a thousand clews.

His second queries were addressed to his father, but Jared lightly denied knowing anything at all concerning the whereabouts of the girl. He was much relieved that Buck had not found her. It seemed to indicate that she was not merely playing a "come-and-follow-me" part in disappearing. Jared was quite aware that ladies who mean their absence for a lure have a habit of scattering clews as they flee. She was not that sort apparently. He did not know why, but, after all, the reason did not concern him; the fact was enough.

Buck found it more agreeable, after his return to town, to set himself up in bachelor quarters than to remain in his father's house. Jared ignored the breach between his son and himself with practiced, worldly ease; he was accustomed to living on pleasant daily terms with gentlemen whose financial throats he was engaged in cutting, and the situation did not disturb him.

But Buck had not yet reached that pleasant state of civilized indifference, and it irked and embarrassed him to be living in his father's house in a condition of critical irritation against his father. So he set up for himself, and was seen at home only occasionally at his mother's tea table. His father he saw almost daily in the offices, but there with work to be done there was less room for personal hostility.

One afternoon as he ran up the steps of the Mather house, filially bent upon inquiring about his mother's cold, an expressman, with stalwart disdain of the tradesmen's entrance, mounted the steps beside him. The horrified butler ordered the uniformed person downstairs, and the uniformed person, rendered bellicose by drink, refused to go. Buck precipitated himself into the parley as a peacemaker.

"Oh, take it, Hawkins," he advised.

Hawkins looked his disapproval as the bellicose one announced that the young gentleman was right, that when little packages like this were insured for more than their weight in gold he wasn't going to leave them with no servants—that he wasn't; he was going to give them into the hands of honest and responsible parties—that he was.

"There, there, that will do! I'll sign for it," said Buck, and suited action to the word.

He took the box—it was of wood, but not unduly large or heavy—and looked casually at the address. A card was tacked upon it.

In the upper left-hand corner of the card were the words: "From R. Carryl, Blue Vale Springs, West Virginia."

So the cup had come at last—and with it, by merest coincidence, the information he sought as to Roxie's whereabouts.

"You had better have Mr. Weatherby put this in the library safe until Mr. Mather comes in, Hawkins," he said.

His call upon his mother was very brief. She noticed that he seemed not only hurried but abstracted in his manner. She mentioned the fact the next day to her husband when he announced that Buck had left town again on his pursuit of the elusive Miss Carryl.

"Perhaps she had written to him," said Jared. "At any rate, he had her address pat when he stopped in my office this morning to tell me where he was going. Ah, well, he will have to take care of himself. He's a man of twenty-five, and we can no longer protect him against clever little adventur-



"I'll do what I can," he told her. "But nothing is mine, you know."

esses. Not that I'm at all sure," he added, "that she is one. Do you observe, my dear, that of the two cups the American one is really in the better state of preservation? Except for that dent near the rim, it is without a blemish."

He looked at the two cups standing before him on the library table with affection, and passed a caressing hand over the smooth silver. He called his wife's attention to the exquisite luster of the enamel about the edges, to the delicacy with which the tiny jewels were inlaid in the engraved scrolls and flowers which surrounded the inscriptions.

"I don't believe that Cellini himself ever turned out a more beautiful thing of the kind," he said, with satisfaction. "And think of the miracle of it, Hortense, the pair of them perfect after all these years!"

"Are they worth paying for by having this Carryl girl as a daughter-in-law?" asked Hortense maliciously.

"I don't believe that is likely to come about," answered Jared. "But they're almost worth that."

CHAPTER VI.

"Then you won't marry me?" Buchanan Mather put the question somewhat with the air of an auctioneer about to utter the word "Gone!"

"No," said Roxie softly, but very firmly.

Her eyes were averted from him, and were fixed upon the trees of the hillside opposite the porch of the Blue Vale House, upon which, to her great agitation, Mr. Buchanan Mather had appeared unheralded at supper time the night before.

"Why not?" demanded Buck, dropping the auctioneer's threatening manner and adopting the beggar's pleading tone.

The girl's face was set and unhappy. "You have no right to press me," she said slowly. "You must simply take my answer."

"I'll take it, and never bother you again," declared Buck, after the time-honored formula, "if you tell me that you're in love with another man. If

you're not"—he spoke almost triumphantly, for Roxie, by a little gesture, had seemed to repudiate the thought of loving another man—"I shall never stop asking you. Are you?" he finished masterfully.

"It doesn't make any difference whether I am or not," said the girl obstinately.

"It makes the greatest difference in the world to me."

"It is perfectly idle for us to go on like this," said Roxie, turning upon him with sudden determination. "I am not engaged to any one else—I am not in love with any one else—but that does not alter the situation in the least. I shall never marry you. There is"—she was winding and unwinding her fingers in her distress—"there is a reason which would always prevent. I shall not tell you what the reason is—there is no use in your asking it. I shall never tell it!" Her tone was vehement. "And I shall never marry you."

"Roxie, don't you love me?"

The color poured over the girl's face and neck. Her eyes filled with bright tears.

"Is it fair of you to try to make me say 'Yes' to that, when I have just told you that I shall never marry you?" she demanded, with soft intensity. "I do not think it is fair."

"Then you do love me!" cried Buck ecstatically. "You wouldn't have made such a long, fierce speech just to tell me that you didn't love me. You'd have been full of the kindest, politest, most friendly regrets at not caring an atom about me."

"How do you know?" asked Roxie, smiling a little in April fashion. "How do you know so much about the way girls tell young gentlemen that they are not in love with them?"

"I'm an inveterate novel reader," replied Buck glibly. "Don't be jealous of all the other girls whom I have given a chance to turn me down. Because, you see, you're the first. And the last and the only one," he added, with a new grave note of tenderness in his voice.

Roxie's lips quivered.

"Oh, don't, don't!" she pleaded. "Indeed—indeed—I meant what I said. I can't marry you, and you must not keep on asking me to, or—or—making love to me."

"You have some silly notion in your head about my father's disapproval," said Buck, staring hard at her.

Roxie looked at him in surprise.

"Why should your father disapprove of me?" she asked, in gentle protest. "Do you mean because we have no money and he has a great deal?"

Buck felt himself almost blushing to find how vulgar his father sounded when expressed in these simple terms.

"That's about what I did mean," he confessed. "We aren't all as high-minded as you, Roxie, and as disdainful of dross. I supposed that you realized that he would probably kick up a row, but I wanted you to understand that it wouldn't make the slightest particle of difference to us—practically. I've served my apprenticeship in the office, and I can get a good job any minute, even with some of his competitors. And I came into some money of my own a few months ago when I was twenty-five—enough to scare the wolf off, unless you should turn out a desperately extravagant young person. So that we don't need to worry over any disinheriting that father might feel like doing—though, to speak the truth of him, he isn't much given to melodrama."

"I'm glad you're independent," answered Roxie. "For your sake, I'm glad—not for mine. I said I could not marry you not knowing anything about your affairs. They have nothing to do with it. The reason"—she struggled to control her voice and features, but they were both tremulous with emotion—"the reason is something purely personal to myself. I shall not talk about it any more. I—I thank you"—the sobs came now—"I wish you happy—" She covered her face with her hands, and ran into the house.

He followed, calling "Miss Carryl! Miss Carryl, just a moment, please!" But the sound of a closing door was the only answer. By and by a negro boy brought him a note. It read:

Please go. I shall never change my answer. I shall not come out again until you have gone. Please go.

The impassioned reply which Mr. Mather immediately indited was returned to him unopened. He waylaid her father coming up in the care of a nurse from the bathhouses, and entreated his assistance. Mr. Carryl immediately promised it, but, remembering the case of Adolph Wohlhaupter, was constrained to say that he was not perfectly sure of Roxie's malleability to paternal influence.

"Once before," he said reminiscently, "I tried to help a young man's cause along with Roxie. And there were even more reasons," he added, remembering the dishwasher and Mr. Wohlhaupter's promise of aid, "why she should have been influenced then than now—"

"Oh, indeed?" interrupted Buck, with jealous fury.

"Yes," returned the unobservant Mr. Carryl, entirely guiltless of offensive intention, "yes. But I'll do what I can for you. I'll do what I can. I certainly would like to see Roxie settled with a good man before I leave her," he added plaintively.

Buck hastened to assure him that it would be a long, long time before he would leave Roxie; but added that when that time came, no one in the world could be found more determined, in spite of all unworthiness, to make her life a happy one. And Jim hobbled off to reason with his daughter, but came back with another failure added to his long list.

"I can't make it out," he said helplessly. "She don't deny that she thinks a heap of you." In moments of perturbation Jim reverted to his old dialect. "But she won't hear of marrying you. I really think," he added apologetically, "that you'd better not press the question now. I don't understand her—her mother was not a bit like this. But I should go, if I were you. If—if I see that she is beginning to think better of it, I'll give you some sign."

Distasteful as Jim Carryl's advice was to the now thoroughly aroused and determined young lover, it seemed best

to follow it when twenty-four hours more had proved that Roxie meant to be adamant in her resolution. Impassioned notes were returned unopened. Window blinds were drawn, and the only suggestion of the girl behind them was in the rays of yellow light that penetrated between their slats when night had come. That was not enough to justify Buck in remaining.

He wrote magnanimously at last:

I cannot keep you a prisoner, and since you deny me the courtesy even—oh, Roxie, Roxie!—which I am sure your kind heart never denied another human being, the courtesy of listening to me and of answering me, I shall go. But if you love me—and I believe you do, for you have not denied it, and I know how quickly you would have denied it if you could honestly have done so—you will marry me some day. I shall never cease to hope and to work for you. Nothing except your marriage to another man can prevent my waiting for you, my expecting you. I am not sure that even that would do it. But for this time, good-by. B.

Buchanan had rather prided himself upon the large and patient tolerance of this note. He was, therefore, much chagrined to have it returned to him after the manner of the others—unopened. He tore it in small pieces, and told himself bad-temperedly that Roxie and her mysteries were nothing to him, and that she would be considerably older before she had a chance again to treat him with contumely. But, having made this declaration of independence, and having adhered to it during the half hour in which he was engaged in packing his bag, he went out, and meekly repeated the substance of his letter to Jim Carryl, to be delivered as a message to Roxie.

Then he took the train for New York, resolved to wring from his father some explanation of the perplexing affair.

He had lived of late upon such critical terms with Jared Mather that the news which met him upon his return was a shock of twofold intensity. Death, which the financier had seen so far off, a gray figure at the end of a long, long vista of days and years, had been lying in wait for him around the corner. The thing which Jared had cynically called impossible in his heart, crude retribu-

tion, had overtaken him. There had been no room for fear in his busy mind, but even had the tiniest crack or crevice admitted it, it would never have been fear of death, fear of indiscriminating justice.

Jared had not been a hypocrite. He would have admitted quite frankly, probably with epigrammatic wit, that he had risen to eminence and power on stepping-stones made of the corpses of other men's hopes and ambitions. Humanity, he would have said, still lived under the natural law of the forest and the cave—the survival of the fittest. He would have claimed no more virtue, no more generosity than all the rest of the world; only more fitness.

Conversely he would have admitted in himself no greater greed, no greater ruthlessness, no more deep-rooted vice of selfishness than in the veriest failure who walked the streets in patched shoes; only more ability. And these things being so in his consciousness, what room was there in his scheme for punishment or reward?

Nevertheless, it had been a man half crazed by the losses engendered by Jared's latest railroad deal who had put an end to his plans and his life. Crude, unreasoning, violent, vulgar—everything that Jared Mather was not—was the manner of his taking off.

He had left his offices on the twenty-first floor of the United Railroads Building, had stepped into the elevator, and had spoken an affable, patronizing word to the elevator man. He had not even noticed the man who stepped in behind him. Not until his sleeve was taken by the stranger did he observe him at all. It was not his first encounter with a crank. One may not be many times a millionaire without meeting occasionally stupid people who fail to understand the beautiful, impersonal working of the law of supply and demand, and who have no respect whatever for the doctrine of the survival of the fittest.

But in all his encounters with such dullards he was quite convinced that he knew how to manage these mild but annoying madmen. It was by an exhibition of cold, unexcited authority, he

maintained. He was wont to boast humorously sometimes that he would make a successful keeper in an insane asylum were his other professions closed to him.

But this time, because his hour had struck, his theories, his methods were vain. He had no time to display authority, to show firmness, fearlessness. For almost before he was aware of the clutch upon his elbow, of the excited words in his ear, he knew, too, that a weapon was pressing against his side. And then he knew no more.

This had happened while Buck's train was bearing him homeward. After the fashion of young lovers, he had not left a detailed plan of his itinerary in the office or in his rooms. No one knew just where to reach him. "South for a few days," had been the indefinite address he had left. It was, therefore, given to the family lawyer to break the news to Hortense.

Buck had not even bought a newspaper to while away the monotony of the trip, or the tragedy might have announced itself to him in glaring headlines across the front page of an "extra."

Thus it was he reached his rooms in the murky twilight of a drizzling spring day, all unprepared for the tidings that awaited him. His heart had been full of resentful questions concerning his father's course with the Carryls. And when the Japanese servant whom he had set up in his new quarters told him, as quietly as if he had been announcing the names of callers, or asking Buck's preference in fish for dinner, of his father's murder, the boy had a sudden horrible sensation of having been allied with the assassin. He, too, had been the unsympathetic critic of his father's methods; he, too, had sat in judgment, stern and unloving, upon his father's acts. He hurried to his mother's house.

When the funeral was over, and the first clamor had died down; when the murderer was safely incarcerated and awaiting trial; when the conservative and respectable sheets had stated their firm conviction that no good ever came of a man's taking the law in his own

hands, and the yellow sheets had subtly asserted a certain sympathy with the man who had constituted himself judge of his enemy; when the obituary anecdotes had all been printed, and when stocks and bonds had recovered from the shock of the great stock and bond manipulator's death, people began to wonder what Jared's will would say. Would he have made large public bequests? Would his library, his pictures, his collections in general be given to the people? The answer was not long to wait. Everything that he had owned, with the exception of a few hundred thousand dollars of endowment to causes in which he was interested, Jared left to his wife.

Upon Hortense, death had had its usual effect. The years in which she and her husband had lived together indifferently, the tempestuous earlier years in which the conflict between their natures had begun to be apparent as the glamour of early love and passion faded, these receded from her thoughts. It was the Jared whom she had married, the young man of the compelling, quiet power; the youth whose magnetism had been more of the mind than of the body whom she remembered.

Instead of reciting to herself all her causes of offense against him—and they were as many and as well known to her as was usual among husbands and wives of their set—she reproached herself with all her own shortcomings. She had never taken an interest in his pursuits, she told herself remorsefully. A wiser woman, a more loving woman, would have forced her mind into the grooves of her husband's. Mere prudence, the mere feminine instinct for conjugal self-preservation, ought to have made her the sharer in all his undertakings; while she, she tormented herself now to think, had had no part in his fortune save in its spending, no part in his ambitions save to reap their reward of power. Why, she had not even been sympathetic with his fads!

It was in this mood of self-reproach that she resolved to make him belated amends. She would give his collections to the city; the great museums should

have rooms named in his honor in which the wonderful things he had delighted to amass should be shown. She pictured his ghost—a smiling, suave connoisseur of a ghost—moving among the cases in which his treasures should be displayed, pausing before the canvases of which he was particularly fond, listening to the grateful praises of the people whom his taste and his liberality had benefited.

Within three months from the time of his death the directors of the great museums of the city knew of her intention, and all the formalities of transfer were arranged.

Before everything was dispersed from the great house on Seventieth Street, she planned one last spectacle as owner. She gave a great reception, not only to the staffs of the galleries which were to profit by the distribution, but to all the public which cared enough for the sight to comply with certain formalities for securing cards. Of course, there was an army of private detectives, an army of plain-clothes men on guard that day. Equally of course, the recently widowed hostess did not appear in person.

Buck, however, did. He dropped in early in the afternoon, along with the curiosity seekers, the book and art lovers, and wandered through the great wing which his father had had built as a library and picture gallery.

He had matured within these months. He saw existence more complexly than he had seen it before; he saw men the victims of their circumstances, the victims of their inheritance, the strugglers after freedom of will and action, bound with a thousand cords not of their own weaving; he even saw his father thus, and the criticism, the hostility he had lately felt for him was merged in a sort of comprehending pity.

And as he walked among these things which his father had assembled with such discrimination, with such simple pride—it suddenly seemed to Buck something almost pathetic, like a woman's pride in dainty household possessions—he felt nearer to him than he had felt since he was a boy.

In one corner of the hall there was a wonderful cabinet, itself a treasure of the woodworker's art; and in it were displayed Jared's choicest pieces of ancient metalwork—jeweled chalices that had gleamed on old Italian altars, bowls that had been heaped with purple and golden grapes at Venetian banquets, communion plates from hoary English abbeys—and among them the Twin Carylton Cups.

Buck looked at them with surging emotions. He had written a note to Roxie telling her of his father's death, but he had had no line in reply. The sight of the cups brought the girl vividly before his eyes in all her slim, wistful, young grace and sweetness. He sighed sharply, and turned away from the cabinet.

And there before his eyes was Roxie in the very flesh. Buck's face flushed with joy, and his eyes glowed.

"You—you!" he stammered. "When did you come? Why did you not answer my note? Why—"

Then he broke off in his eager questions. The girl was looking at him with strained, almost terrified eyes. And although her new clothes were smarter than any he had seen her wear, there was something shrinking about her figure.

"I want to see your mother," she whispered breathlessly. "I have asked to see her, but they will not let me."

"She is not seeing any one just now except her family and business people," answered Buck gently. "Is there anything that I—"

"Yes." Roxie's words came hurriedly tumbling over each other. "When your father—bargained—with me for the cup, and I took things into my own hands, he promised that there should be no newspaper talk of his purchase until—until—oh, until my father's death. It did not seem as though it would be long to wait. No one could ever have dreamed that it would be he—Mr. Mather, your father—who would go first. But now he is dead, and my father is alive. And my father does not know that I have sold the cup. When he reads it in the papers—and he is

sure to if your mother gives the pair away now—it will kill him. Not just the loss of the cup, though that will be terrible to him, but that I could play him false, that I could deceive him, trick him, lie to him! For I promised him once that even after he was gone I would never sell the cup. He must not know it—she must withdraw the cup from her gift.”

She had talked in a low, rapid, excited voice. The warm brown eyes were glittering with misery, and on the pale face two small disks of furious color glowed. It suddenly occurred to Buck that she was even thinner than she had been before, that instead of seeming rested and refreshed by the change which her modest affluence had made possible to her, she seemed more than ever harassed and driven.

“I’ll do what I can,” he told her. “But nothing is mine, you know. It is all my mother’s. She may consent to withhold these, but you know everything has been formally arranged. The papers have been signed; the lists are complete. It may be too late. But how—how were you going to manage if your father had ever asked to see the cup? Don’t think that I blame you,” he added quickly. “Don’t think that I regard what you call your deceit as anything but nobility. I understand. I understand your need, and I understand, too, my father’s pressure upon you. But—if your father ever does ask to see the cup—” He ended his sentence with a rising inflection.

Roxie looked more miserable still. The feverish color faded from her cheeks. She shrank from him.

“Don’t ask me,” she entreated.

“I’ll not ask you anything which you do not want to tell me,” replied Buck.

But she summoned a desperate courage, and whispered: “Oh, I’ll tell you—I’ll tell you. I’ll be glad to have you know it. It has been driving me mad. Your father gave me the materials to forge a copy of our Carrylton Cup. I have that to quiet my father if he should ever ask to see our heirloom.”

Buck looked at her with a sort of horror in his eyes.

“It was my father’s suggestion?” he asked.

Roxie laughed shortly and nodded.

“It was, indeed. I was not clever enough to think of such a thing.” Then her eyes suddenly filled with tears, and her lips quivered. “How you must despise me,” she said brokenly. “How my father would despise me—and my mother—oh, how disappointed she would be in me!”

She seemed on the verge of an hysterical collapse. Buck took her by the arm, and led her away from the cabinet and toward a side door that led down into Mr. Mather’s tiny city garden—a matter rather of marble seats and bowls than of greenery and blossoms.

“It is not you whom I despise,” he told her, as he led her into the sunshine.

He was hot with shame for the father who had played upon a girl’s necessity, who had taught her the path of deceit. And to think that a large part of that father’s wealth had been gained upon the girl’s holdings! It was shameful—it was indecent!

Out in the sunshine Roxie pulled herself together, and the threatened attack of tears was overcome. She would not let Buck accompany her to the hotel at which she was staying. But she did allow him to summon a hansom which was cruising expectantly through the street, and she drove off in that, leaving Buck for a moment with the pleasant illusion that there were daffodils blooming among the urns and pillars of the yard.

He had promised to present her case to his mother, and to see what could be done toward suppressing the transfer of the King’s Twin Carrylton Cups for the present. Roxie was sure that up to this time her father had seen no mention of them in the papers which he had read. She had left him at the Blue Vale Springs, and she would return to him the next day. There was something heart-warming to Buck about the way in which she left her fortune in his hands.

Mrs. Mather, hearing of Roxie’s visit,

was inclined to think that the girl made a great ado over nothing. The possession of such strong feelings was unbecoming among that class of persons. At that point Buck gravely interrupted her with the announcement that he hoped some day to persuade Roxie to marry him.

His mother's indignation was great. She invoked everything, including his father's memory, to show him how unfortunate such a marriage would be. She even went so far as to threaten him with disinheritance in the event of his marrying the girl. Buck bore the threat with equanimity, and used his mother's indignation and fear as a means of gaining his immediate end.

But unsuccessfully. Hortense's mood at the moment was to see herself as her husband's only friend; even his son was against him. She would not be influenced by anything said by an unfilial young man, who presumed to criticize his father, and to sit in judgment upon him.

All that Buck's presentation of poor Roxie's case accomplished was the suppression for the time being of the old diary which gave the history of the origin of the cups. All that Buck could hope for was that Roxie would be able to keep the New York papers from her father's sight, and that these sheets would be more interested in the world-famous pictures than in the less renowned objects.

He wrote Roxie to this effect, and, being fairly sure this time that his letter would be read, at least, added a paragraph concerning his own hopes and his quite unshakable intentions. In reply he had a note from Roxie telling him that she was leaving Blue Vale, that she would never under any circumstances marry him, that he need not seek her, as he would not be able to find her, and thanking him in an incoherent, miserable way.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a year after Jared Mather's death. The world in which he had played so important a part wagged on

comfortably, forgetting him. The widow who had experienced the miracle of the phoenix—the resurrection of love from its gray ashes—had recovered from that emotional phase of her existence, and society sheets were speculating in not too veiled a way upon the possibility of her remarriage.

In the Art Museum, in the great New Library, in the Natural History Museum, the various "Jared Mather Collections" were stared at stupidly by indifferent sight-seers, or studied by those not indifferent.

Somewhere on the earth were Roxie and her father; or, at any rate, so Buchanan Mather imagined. But where he did not know. East and West he had looked for her, but in vain. Now he was suddenly half reconciled to her loss. After all, the girl could not have cared for him, in spite of all the assurance that his hopes and his pulses gave him that she did; and he certainly did not wish to pursue an unwilling bride. He would give himself a little longer to recover from the longing he felt for her, and then he would do as did the other men of his set—marry an attractive girl with money. Why not?

And then one day to the museum came a German connoisseur, the head of a great gallery of antiquities in his native country. He was dined and wined in sedate scholastic fashion by the gentlemen of his profession in New York; and he went to galleries, public and private, and made bland complimentary speeches about the things that he saw. But one day, holding in his hands one of the King's Carrylton Cups, he broke into speech not complimentary.

"Why, this," he cried, in German, "is not like the other. This is a fraud!" And the eyes behind his great convex spectacles gleamed with excitement.

The director of the museum himself was accompanying the German connoisseur on his rounds. He politely disclaimed the possibility of fraud. The visitor threw mere politeness to the winds.

"Bah!" he cried, in his native language. "Bah! This thing I hold in my

hand is a forgery—a forgery, I tell you! It is not even silver!"

There was but one reply to make to such an accusation from such a source. That was to have the matter tested immediately. The gentlemen all retired to the director's office. And there, beneath magnifying glasses and the action of acids, the King's Carylton Cup was examined. The German savant was proved right.

Now, a body of art connoisseurs inflamed by the discovery of a fraud can make almost as much noise about it as a political convention, or a declaration of hostility between two countries, can make. Mrs. Mather, visiting in Budapest, was made aware of the situation by cable. Buck, at work on Wall Street, was acquainted with it by telephone. The public was apprised of it by large-headlined articles in the newspapers.

Buck, of all the large group, alone understood. So she had practiced the fraud upon Jared Mather, tempting her to fraud, and not upon her own father. And that, his heart told him, that wrong done to his household, was the barrier that had stood between him and her, and not her own coldness.

He could almost laugh at the trick. Jared, whose forte all his life long had been "getting the better of" other people—Jared to have been so hoodwinked in the end—and by a large-eyed slip of a girl! Poor child, what agonies of humiliation and remorse she must have suffered! What hot shame, what conflicts between the desire to be true to her father at any cost, and the searing consciousness of being a trickster.

Would this hullabaloo about the discovery of the fraud reach her eye, and would she vouchsafe any explanation to him, any apology? Or was she wandering far off somewhere where objects of bric-a-brac were unimportant and did not figure in the day's news?

Wherever she was, he would try to find her. The old determination came back with the discovery of a reason for her attitude toward him. Meantime, he must express to the museum authorities the proper consternation, the proper in-

ability to shed any light upon the situation.

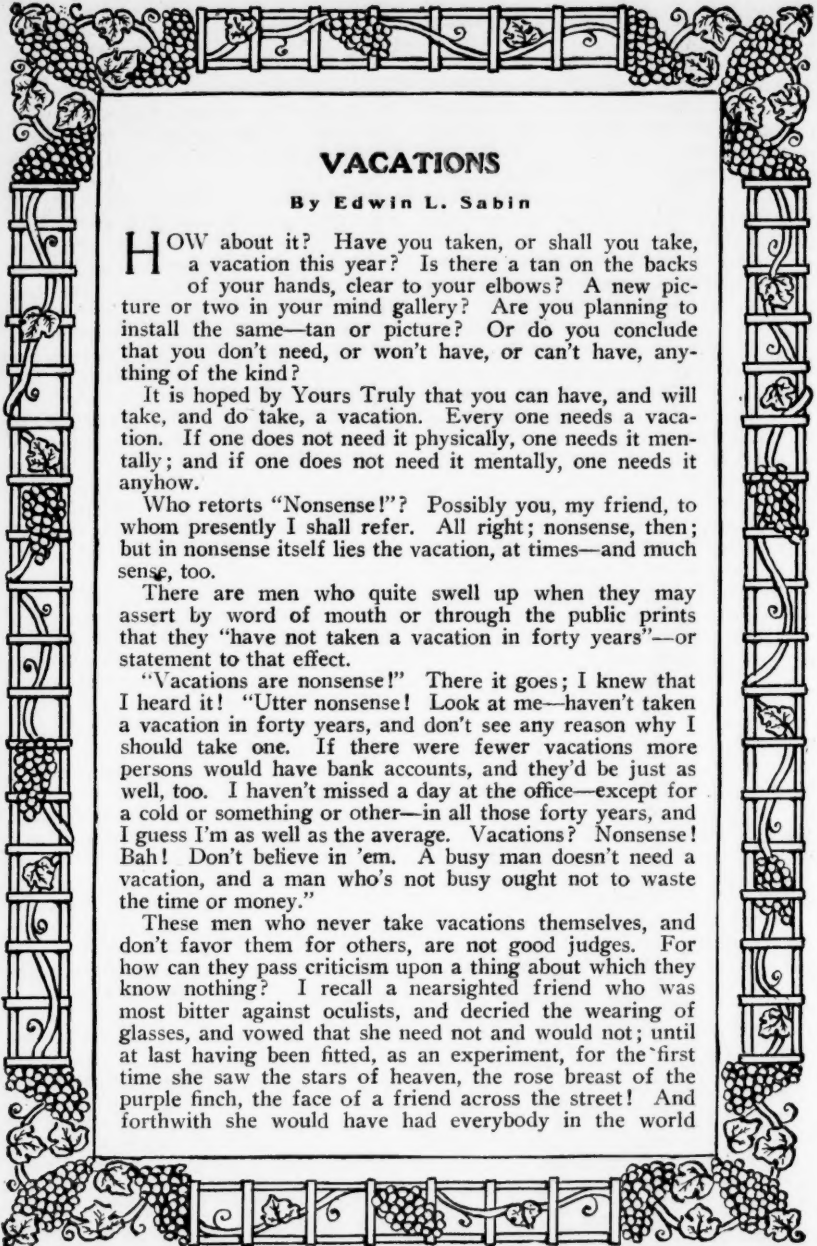
On the fourth morning after the publication of the discovery he found upon his desk in his office a night telegram. He opened it unexpectedly, but at the date he gave a little start. It had been sent from Cloud Cap. His eyes ran hastily down to the signature—"R. C." And then he read the fifty words into which Roxie had managed to compress a whole epic of miserable wandering, of shame, and of longing. She had told her father the truth before he died, just a month ago. He had bidden her make restitution. He had forgiven her deception—he had understood it—he had even loved her the more for what she had done for his sake. And now, all the sad occupations which had kept her busy for the last month being past, she was sending him the true cup. She would give the museum officials whatever statement of the truth they desired, whatever statement he—Buck—dictated.

Buck read the telegram a second time. His face was alight with gladness and determination. He folded it carefully, and put it in his waistcoat pocket. Then he went to his chief.

"I've been called West," he said. "Something about this cup business. I'll be gone four or five days."

The chief confided to the next in greatness, after Buck had left the office, that from Mather's face he judged he was on the track of the person who had "put it all over old Mather in the matter of that cup."

And Buck journeyed West with hope and resolution in his heart, with the tender conviction of success at last, and with a vague memory of a dusky evening long, long gone by, when a tired, hard-working woman had smiled upon him and her daughter, wandering out into the large-starred dusk. And it almost seemed to him that it was to that plain figure he made a promise as the train whirled him on across the continent; to her ideals of love and sacrifice, of labor and content, that he pledged himself.



VACATIONS

By Edwin L. Sabin

HOW about it? Have you taken, or shall you take, a vacation this year? Is there a tan on the backs of your hands, clear to your elbows? A new picture or two in your mind gallery? Are you planning to install the same—tan or picture? Or do you conclude that you don't need, or won't have, or can't have, anything of the kind?

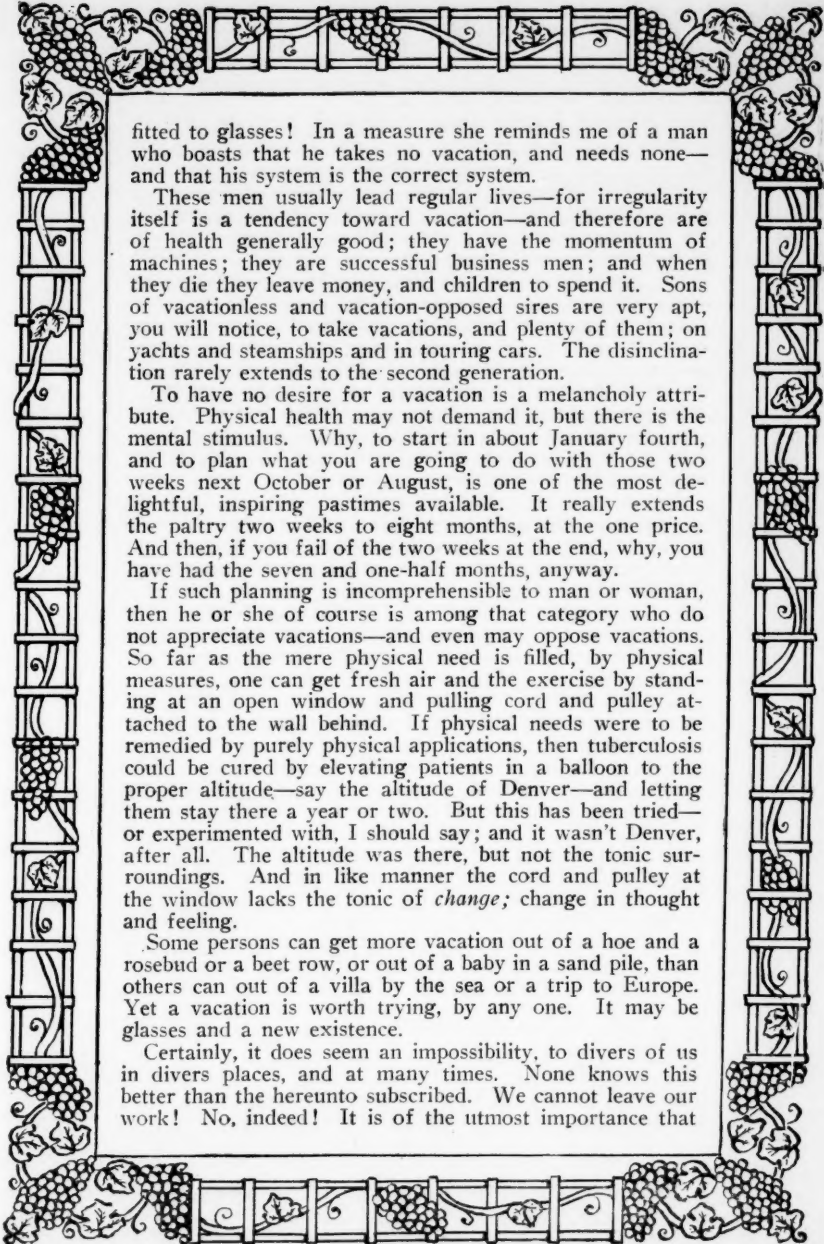
It is hoped by Yours Truly that you can have, and will take, and do take, a vacation. Every one needs a vacation. If one does not need it physically, one needs it mentally; and if one does not need it mentally, one needs it anyhow.

Who retorts "Nonsense!"? Possibly you, my friend, to whom presently I shall refer. All right; nonsense, then; but in nonsense itself lies the vacation, at times—and much sense, too.

There are men who quite swell up when they may assert by word of mouth or through the public prints that they "have not taken a vacation in forty years"—or statement to that effect.

"Vacations are nonsense!" There it goes; I knew that I heard it! "Utter nonsense! Look at me—haven't taken a vacation in forty years, and don't see any reason why I should take one. If there were fewer vacations more persons would have bank accounts, and they'd be just as well, too. I haven't missed a day at the office—except for a cold or something or other—in all those forty years, and I guess I'm as well as the average. Vacations? Nonsense! Bah! Don't believe in 'em. A busy man doesn't need a vacation, and a man who's not busy ought not to waste the time or money."

These men who never take vacations themselves, and don't favor them for others, are not good judges. For how can they pass criticism upon a thing about which they know nothing? I recall a nearsighted friend who was most bitter against oculists, and decried the wearing of glasses, and vowed that she need not and would not; until at last having been fitted, as an experiment, for the first time she saw the stars of heaven, the rose breast of the purple finch, the face of a friend across the street! And forthwith she would have had everybody in the world



fitted to glasses! In a measure she reminds me of a man who boasts that he takes no vacation, and needs none—and that his system is the correct system.

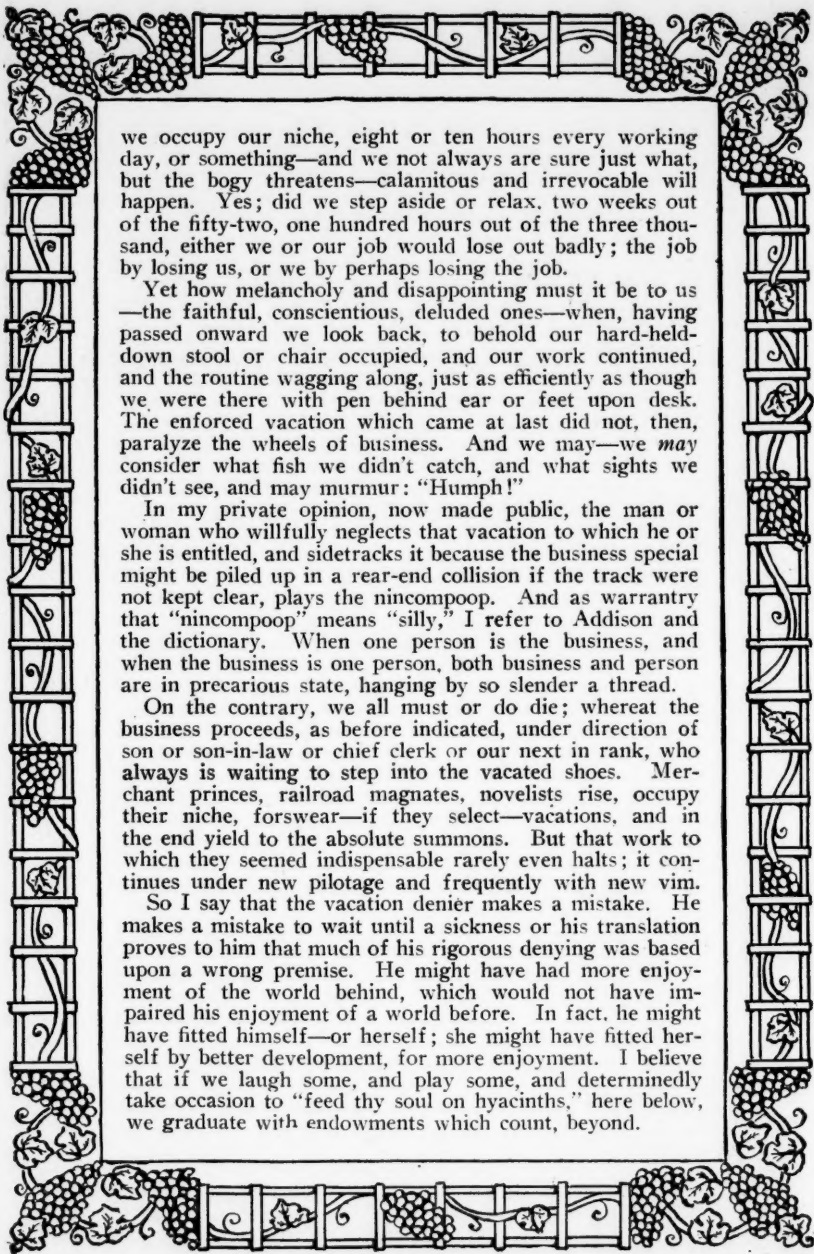
These men usually lead regular lives—for irregularity itself is a tendency toward vacation—and therefore are of health generally good; they have the momentum of machines; they are successful business men; and when they die they leave money, and children to spend it. Sons of vacationless and vacation-opposed sires are very apt, you will notice, to take vacations, and plenty of them; on yachts and steamships and in touring cars. The disinclination rarely extends to the second generation.

To have no desire for a vacation is a melancholy attribute. Physical health may not demand it, but there is the mental stimulus. Why, to start in about January fourth, and to plan what you are going to do with those two weeks next October or August, is one of the most delightful, inspiring pastimes available. It really extends the paltry two weeks to eight months, at the one price. And then, if you fail of the two weeks at the end, why, you have had the seven and one-half months, anyway.

If such planning is incomprehensible to man or woman, then he or she of course is among that category who do not appreciate vacations—and even may oppose vacations. So far as the mere physical need is filled, by physical measures, one can get fresh air and the exercise by standing at an open window and pulling cord and pulley attached to the wall behind. If physical needs were to be remedied by purely physical applications, then tuberculosis could be cured by elevating patients in a balloon to the proper altitude—say the altitude of Denver—and letting them stay there a year or two. But this has been tried—or experimented with, I should say; and it wasn't Denver, after all. The altitude was there, but not the tonic surroundings. And in like manner the cord and pulley at the window lacks the tonic of *change*; change in thought and feeling.

Some persons can get more vacation out of a hoe and a rosebud or a beet row, or out of a baby in a sand pile, than others can out of a villa by the sea or a trip to Europe. Yet a vacation is worth trying, by any one. It may be glasses and a new existence.

Certainly, it does seem an impossibility, to divers of us in divers places, and at many times. None knows this better than the hereunto subscribed. We cannot leave our work! No, indeed! It is of the utmost importance that



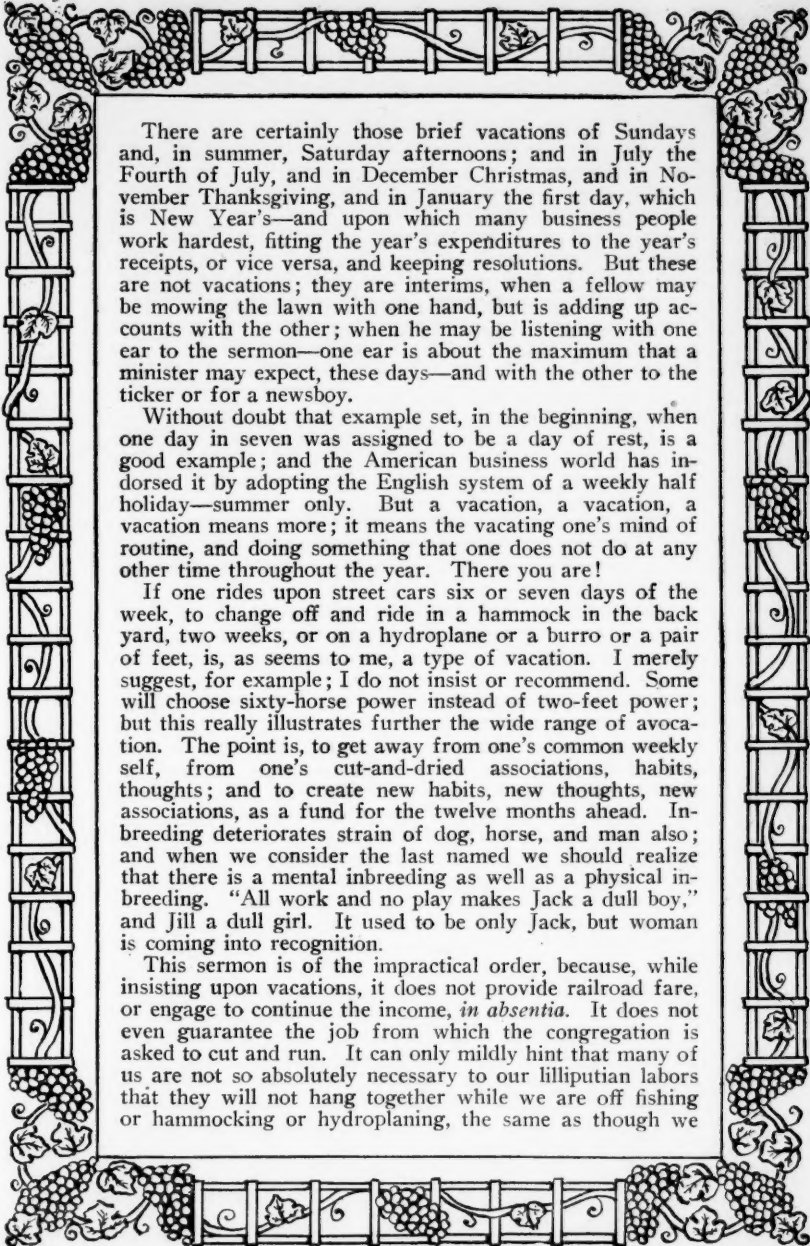
we occupy our niche, eight or ten hours every working day, or something—and we not always are sure just what, but the boggy threatens—calamitous and irrevocable will happen. Yes; did we step aside or relax, two weeks out of the fifty-two, one hundred hours out of the three thousand, either we or our job would lose out badly; the job by losing us, or we by perhaps losing the job.

Yet how melancholy and disappointing must it be to us—the faithful, conscientious, deluded ones—when, having passed onward we look back, to behold our hard-held-down stool or chair occupied, and our work continued, and the routine wagging along, just as efficiently as though we were there with pen behind ear or feet upon desk. The enforced vacation which came at last did not, then, paralyze the wheels of business. And we may—we *may* consider what fish we didn't catch, and what sights we didn't see, and may murmur: "Humph!"

In my private opinion, now made public, the man or woman who willfully neglects that vacation to which he or she is entitled, and sidetracks it because the business special might be piled up in a rear-end collision if the track were not kept clear, plays the nincompoop. And as warantry that "nincompoop" means "silly," I refer to Addison and the dictionary. When one person is the business, and when the business is one person, both business and person are in precarious state, hanging by so slender a thread.

On the contrary, we all must or do die; whereat the business proceeds, as before indicated, under direction of son or son-in-law or chief clerk or our next in rank, who always is waiting to step into the vacated shoes. Merchant princes, railroad magnates, novelists rise, occupy their niche, forswear—if they select—vacations, and in the end yield to the absolute summons. But that work to which they seemed indispensable rarely even halts; it continues under new pilotage and frequently with new vim.

So I say that the vacation denier makes a mistake. He makes a mistake to wait until a sickness or his translation proves to him that much of his rigorous denying was based upon a wrong premise. He might have had more enjoyment of the world behind, which would not have impaired his enjoyment of a world before. In fact, he might have fitted himself—or herself; she might have fitted herself by better development, for more enjoyment. I believe that if we laugh some, and play some, and determinedly take occasion to "feed thy soul on hyacinths," here below, we graduate with endowments which count, beyond.

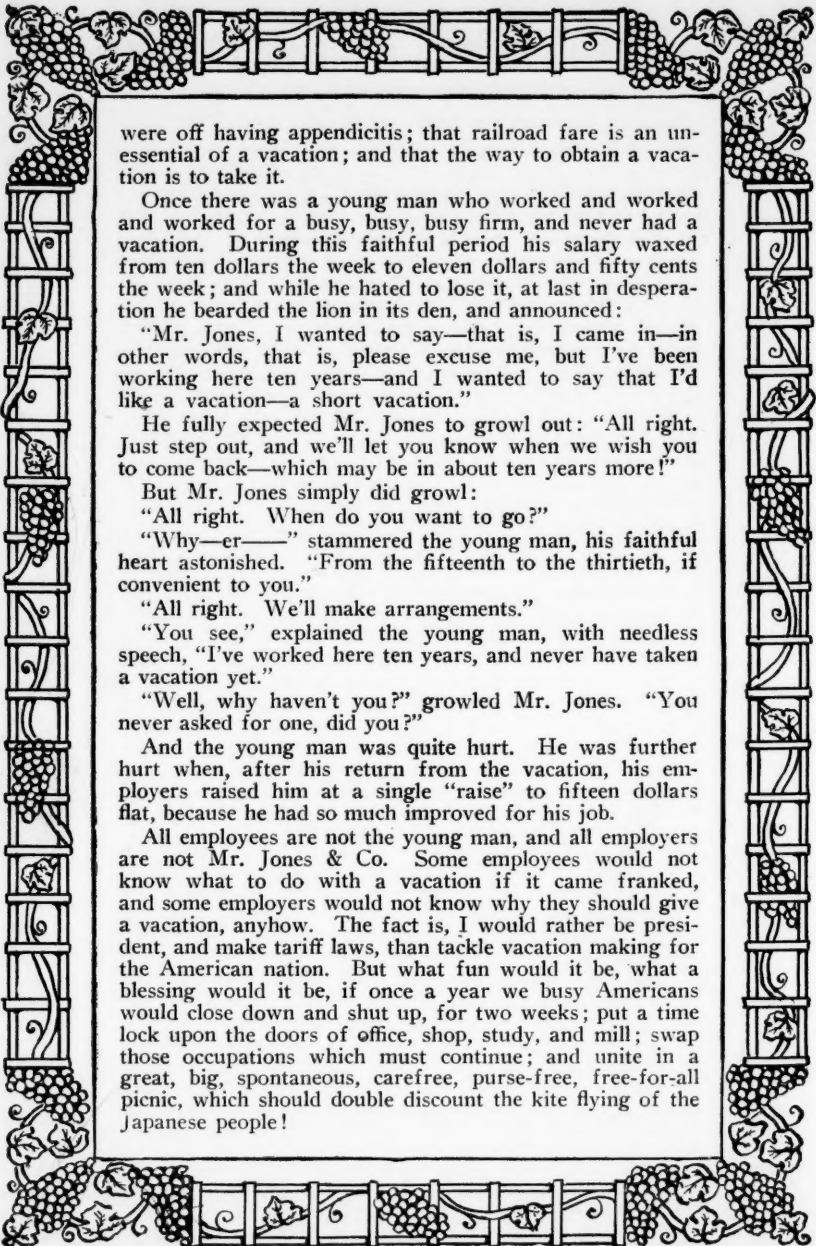


There are certainly those brief vacations of Sundays and, in summer, Saturday afternoons; and in July the Fourth of July, and in December Christmas, and in November Thanksgiving, and in January the first day, which is New Year's—and upon which many business people work hardest, fitting the year's expenditures to the year's receipts, or vice versa, and keeping resolutions. But these are not vacations; they are interims, when a fellow may be mowing the lawn with one hand, but is adding up accounts with the other; when he may be listening with one ear to the sermon—one ear is about the maximum that a minister may expect, these days—and with the other to the ticker or for a newsboy.

Without doubt that example set, in the beginning, when one day in seven was assigned to be a day of rest, is a good example; and the American business world has indorsed it by adopting the English system of a weekly half holiday—summer only. But a vacation, a vacation, a vacation means more; it means the vacating one's mind of routine, and doing something that one does not do at any other time throughout the year. There you are!

If one rides upon street cars six or seven days of the week, to change off and ride in a hammock in the back yard, two weeks, or on a hydroplane or a burro or a pair of feet, is, as seems to me, a type of vacation. I merely suggest, for example; I do not insist or recommend. Some will choose sixty-horse power instead of two-foot power; but this really illustrates further the wide range of avocation. The point is, to get away from one's common weekly self, from one's cut-and-dried associations, habits, thoughts; and to create new habits, new thoughts, new associations, as a fund for the twelve months ahead. Inbreeding deteriorates strain of dog, horse, and man also; and when we consider the last named we should realize that there is a mental inbreeding as well as a physical inbreeding. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and Jill a dull girl. It used to be only Jack, but woman is coming into recognition.

This sermon is of the impractical order, because, while insisting upon vacations, it does not provide railroad fare, or engage to continue the income, *in absentia*. It does not even guarantee the job from which the congregation is asked to cut and run. It can only mildly hint that many of us are not so absolutely necessary to our lilliputian labors that they will not hang together while we are off fishing or hammocking or hydroplaning, the same as though we



were off having appendicitis; that railroad fare is an unessential of a vacation; and that the way to obtain a vacation is to take it.

Once there was a young man who worked and worked and worked for a busy, busy, busy firm, and never had a vacation. During this faithful period his salary waxed from ten dollars the week to eleven dollars and fifty cents the week; and while he hated to lose it, at last in desperation he bearded the lion in its den, and announced:

"Mr. Jones, I wanted to say—that is, I came in—in other words, that is, please excuse me, but I've been working here ten years—and I wanted to say that I'd like a vacation—a short vacation."

He fully expected Mr. Jones to growl out: "All right. Just step out, and we'll let you know when we wish you to come back—which may be in about ten years more!"

But Mr. Jones simply did growl:

"All right. When do you want to go?"

"Why—er——" stammered the young man, his faithful heart astonished. "From the fifteenth to the thirtieth, if convenient to you."

"All right. We'll make arrangements."

"You see," explained the young man, with needless speech, "I've worked here ten years, and never have taken a vacation yet."

"Well, why haven't you?" growled Mr. Jones. "You never asked for one, did you?"

And the young man was quite hurt. He was further hurt when, after his return from the vacation, his employers raised him at a single "raise" to fifteen dollars flat, because he had so much improved for his job.

All employees are not the young man, and all employers are not Mr. Jones & Co. Some employees would not know what to do with a vacation if it came franked, and some employers would not know why they should give a vacation, anyhow. The fact is, I would rather be president, and make tariff laws, than tackle vacation making for the American nation. But what fun would it be, what a blessing would it be, if once a year we busy Americans would close down and shut up, for two weeks; put a time lock upon the doors of office, shop, study, and mill; swap those occupations which must continue; and unite in a great, big, spontaneous, carefree, purse-free, free-for-all picnic, which should double discount the kite flying of the Japanese people!



ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

THE Brussels carpet was far from new. It had graced the floor of the Bentley parlor ever since its arrival as a wedding present to Mrs. Bentley a quarter of a century before. Yet it was singularly unworn, and a pleasant thing to look upon. Time had dimmed the original bold coloring somewhat, but this only added to its beauty. Great rings of pink and yellow roses covered its dull-green expanse, and in the middle of each ring, like a picture in a frame, a solitary white swan eternally swam on a splotch of silver-blue lake.

Samuel Carson, perhaps Beakstown's most promising young lawyer, and certainly Beakstown's most eligible young man, could have painted you an exact picture of that carpet, if you had asked him to, with nothing more than his memory and a box of school paints to assist him. Its quaint design had always held a peculiar charm for him. He never once anticipated a Sunday evening call on pretty Janey Bentley, with whom he was desperately in love, without his imagination leaping forward to combine the pastel roses, the crystalline lakes, the downy swans, and indescribable Janey, in one delicious, romantic conglomeration.

But there came a night when his ardent vision failed of the usual happy realization.

He felt a strangely unpleasant change in the atmosphere almost from the moment he was admitted to Janey's silk-

muslin presence. Somehow the limpid lakes seemed to be rigid with ice, the blowsy roses blighted, and the fair swans stiff and dead.

But he was not long in discovering that nothing was really different but Janey. From Janey's springtime personality there subtly but unmistakably stole a harsh and unaccustomed hint of winter.

His cordial invitation to sit beside him on the plump rep sofa was ignored. Crossing to the extreme opposite side of the room, his adored one perched herself upon the extreme edge of a stiff, uncomfortable little chair. Her manner was one of distant and pre-occupied formality. In reply to his polite questions she answered that her father, mother, and Aunt Luella had gone to Sunday evening meeting as usual. Yes, she believed they did like the new minister—especially Aunt Luella. Yes, it did seem to be growing cooler. Yes, she was well, very well, indeed, thank you! What made him think she wasn't?

There was an unbecoming pucker in her usually bland forehead, and with the pointed toe of her slipper she attacked moodily the curving wings of an inoffending Brussels swan.

Carson's heavily fringed brown eyes narrowed as he watched her. Himself and his attentions had invariably met with a hearty welcome before. A silence fell between them that for the time being separated them as completely as

miles of distance could have done. He waited in vain for any attempt on her part to pick up the dropped thread of conversation. The young woman gave her undivided attention to ruffling the plumage of the swan.

"What's the matter, Janey?" he queried at last, suddenly and sternly. "Something's wrong! You may as well own up. Why are you giving me the cold shoulder like this?"

Janey raised her eyebrows, genuinely surprised.

"Dear me! Am I giving you the cold shoulder? It wasn't intentional, I'm sure."

Carson gave a rueful, boyish laugh. "I feel as frozen as a polar bear imbedded in a cake of ice!"

Her voice became a shade softer.

"I'm sorry if I was unkind. I suppose I seemed that way, perhaps, because I'm so bothered about something." She sank her round cheek thoughtfully in her palm, her elbow resting on the table at her side. "Yes, I'm dreadfully bothered about something," she continued gloomily. "Bothered about—whether to tell it to you or not, I mean. In one way it seems to me that I ought to do so, on account of your—interest—er—I mean on account of your having called here so often—but in another way it doesn't, and I'd rather not."

Carson leaned forward with tremendous eagerness.

"Oh, do be confidential, Janey. I don't like this reserve between you and me. What's troubling you? What sort of a problem is it? Haven't we been chums for a long time now—the best kind of chums? Why shouldn't you tell me anything and everything that's on your mind? I want to help you if I can."

The girl shrank back in her chair, clutching at its sides.

"But you can't help me. That's not possible. I could never make you understand the way I feel about it, no matter how hard I tried, because I know positively that you won't sympathize with me in the least—you can't. And it isn't at all easy to—to explain your wishes, your future plans to people,

when you just know every one is certain to be against you."

There was an accent of martyrdom in her tone as she concluded.

A bewildered expression stole over Carson's frank, youthful face.

"But why should I oppose any hopes or plans of yours, Janey? Haven't I a part in them? I believed I had—especially lately—hoped so, at least."

An old family album lay slantwise on the table. Janey slid it nervously into her lap, and began turning its leaves.

"I hate to tell you," she murmured at last tremulously, and without looking up, "but in the plans I mention you haven't—can't have—any part whatever. Because they necessarily shut out—sentimental things."

Carson gave a slight start. He was beginning to see the direction in which they were drifting.

Janey's head bent lower over the album.

"That's why I hated so much to tell you what I'm going to do, until it's all over."

Carefully concealing his feeling of alarm, Carson spoke to her in his usual, gentle, winning way:

"You have plans that shut out sentiment, girlie? I haven't—not one! Because every plan I have in the world is in some way connected with you, depends upon you. So I really can't consent, you see, to your having hopes, and wishes, and plans that leave me out."

With an air of exaggerated interest Janey wiped an invisible speck of dust from the features of a forgotten relative.

"You mustn't take that tone with me," she said faintly, but with a visible effort to brace herself for an argument, "because even if my plans had to do with sentimental things, which they haven't, why, even then you know I'm not really engaged to you. Though I don't deny," she added, still faintly, but defiantly, "that I have—sort of—led you on."

Then she was indirectly dismissing him! Carson smiled bitterly, remembering that this was the peaceful, blissful Sunday evening he had selected as the



"I hate to tell you," she murmured at last tremulously, "but in the plans I mention you haven't—can't have—any part whatever."

one which should settle the date of their wedding—his and Janey's! For some moments he did not trust himself to speak. He wished to estimate correctly just how formidable the barrier might be that had so unexpectedly loomed up between them. He and Janey were not engaged—she had spoken truly—but almost from the hour of their first meeting, a year and a half ago, he had looked upon her steadily and determinedly as his future wife. That was Samuel Carson's way. When he once decided he wanted a thing, he regarded it thereafter as virtually his, and usually wound up by possessing it.

"Just one question, Janey," he ventured quietly, as she closed and replaced the album. "You made a big hit in those town-hall theatricals last week, didn't you? Has that anything to do with those unsentimental plans of ours?

Has the acting bee begun buzzing around in your little bonnet since then?"

An electric spark of anger shot from Janey's blue eyes.

"Oh, I knew you would just consider it a bee in my bonnet—a crazy idea! But it isn't. It's a great big ambition, that swallows me up, body and soul. Of course, you label me a silly, stage-struck goose. I didn't expect anything else!" Then she looked at him pleadingly, as if begging him to deny the unflattering opinion of herself that she had attributed to him. Carson's face was impassive, and he remained silent. "I resent your looking at it that way," Janey blazed suddenly, quivering with wounded vanity. "I think it's very unkind—and—and—unjust!"

She sprang up and rushed to the window, turning her back on the unhappy young man. Pushing aside the folds of

the heavy lace curtain, she pretended to be looking out onto the lawn. In reality she was watching the reflection of Sam's bowed, curly head. She wished she had never met him, so she told herself. No girl could help being fond of such a strong, manly chap as Sam, and it made it so much harder for her to hold to the course she had mapped out for herself—but hold to it she would! She clenched her fists, and set her teeth together. Out in the big world fame and fortune awaited her—of that she was certain!

"I don't consider you either silly or a goose," she heard Sam saying presently. "On the contrary, I think you have dramatic ability—lots of it. But I do not think you are a genius—frankly and honestly I must tell you that. But—granting for the sake of argument that you are a genius, Janey, what then? What's all this leading to?"

Swiftly the girl went back, and took her stand by the table, bringing her tight fist down upon it in a series of positive little thumps.

"It all amounts to just this: I'm leaving town to apply for a position on the professional stage. I've just got to do it. You may laugh if you like, but I believe I have real genius for acting. I'm absolutely certain that if I can only get one of the big managers to hear me recite something from Shakespeare—the rest will be easy. And when I once get a fair start—oh, I feel so sure of success!"

Her cheeks flushed. Beneath the demure folds of her fichu her bosom heaved excitedly, and her clenched hands loosed themselves in an airy, triumphant movement above her head. Carson's gaze sought hers in dumb appeal, but she looked back at him with eyes so full of fanciful dreams that he doubted if she saw him at all. It was, then, a very real barrier that had risen between them, and much more formidable than he had thought.

"Of course," she went on, more calmly, as she subsided into a chair, "I had to argue and argue with father and mother, before I got their consent. They thought it would be much nicer, natu-

rally—being old-fashioned church folks—if I just stayed right here and married you."

Carson winced at the unconscious touch of contempt in her tone as she mentioned the wish of her parents. His face grew red, then pale.

"But," she continued, "as I'm their only unmarried child, and the youngest, I convinced them finally that it was their duty to let me be something in the world if I wanted to, instead of just—well, just settling down like the others."

Carson remained outwardly calm, but deep in his heart he felt hurt, outraged. He had offered Janey the very jewel of his soul, and it was nothing more to her than a bit of worthless glass! Right at the outset of his larger life, the girl he had chosen for his mate was plainly setting other things above his love. He was a rich man's son, but not the proverbial one. He was neither wicked nor weak. His boyish features were full of the promise of strength in later years, square-jawed, deep-eyed, though just now he wore a baffled look. Janey, noting his expression and his unaccustomed pallor, felt a sharp though momentary twinge of conscience.

"Of course I'm fond of you, Sam," she said, with just a hint of her old, tender smile; "awfully! And I know that any other girl in town would jump at the chance of marrying you. I don't deny that it has been a struggle for me to give you up. And if it were possible to be an actress and—and be a domestic little wife at the same time—"

"Why isn't it?" demanded Sam, grasping eagerly and instantly at the forlorn hope thus presented. "You could marry me and keep right on running the Beakstown Thespians, just the same, and keep right on being the star reciter of the place, as you are now. Maybe it wouldn't be as brilliant a career as the one you have pictured for yourself outside—of course it wouldn't—here in Beakstown—but"—his deep voice became surcharged with such a depth of feeling that it thrilled Janey in spite of herself—"but it seems like the love of a man's whole heart ought to make up to you for something."

He crossed the room, and would have taken her in his arms, but she moved away from him in a sort of fear.

"Don't—please don't—try to blind me to facts. It won't do any good. I'll just go back to my old way of thinking the minute you are gone. Don't you suppose I've fought it all out with myself, over and over? Marriage and genius can't walk hand in hand. Look at my sister Katherine!"

"Well," said Carson, quite coldly, his ardor chilled. "What about Katherine?"

Janey's face grew pinched with embarrassment. She hesitated for a moment through sheer maidenliness, then plunged desperately ahead.

"Bound hand and foot by a family, poor Katherine is! Of course, you know how much money father spent on her art education before she got married? I've told you all about it. Well, with a houseful of kids, she doesn't have time enough now even to paint a china cup for a Christmas gift. That's what has become of her ambition. And look at Cousin Gertrude," she continued indignantly. "Gertrude declared she'd keep right on playing the organ, and leading the choir, whether she married Ned Bunce or not. Poor Gertie! She has another kind of choir that needs all her time now, a choir of small Bunces! And she's forgotten she ever knew how to play an organ."

If the pink and yellow roses had been real, instead of only woven ones, the emphatic stamp of Janey's foot would have crushed their petals to a pulp.

"I won't be held down like that. Why, just imagine my trying to recite at some entertainment here in Beakstown, with a youngster out in the audience interrupting me by bawling 'Mamma!' at the top of his lungs!"

Carson's face grew radiant.

"Oh, Janey!" he breathed impulsively. "That kid's voice would be the sweetest music in the world to me! Oh, don't you see yourself that that's a prettier picture than—"

But the girl interrupted him, crimson with anger:

"There, I guessed as much, and now

you prove it to me! You're just like other men—just as selfish! You pretend you'd like to have me be something, but it's only pretense, after all! Deep in your heart you think I ought to sacrifice myself, and my talent, for the sake of running a sort of—kindergarten. Well, I just won't! I aspire to—to something better."

"Something different, perhaps," corrected Carson quietly, "but hardly something better."

"I have drawn my own conclusions, and I don't care to discuss the question," quoth Janey, with finality.

She began pacing up and down the floor in the stately, long-stepped fashion she always assumed when practicing the title rôle of "The Lady of Lyons." She had often imagined herself as impersonating the lovely and imperious *Pauline* before crowds of admiring auditors, and more especially since her last leading-lady performance with the Beakstown Thespians.

How small, how utterly insignificant Sam's ideas of a future appeared by contrast! How small and insignificant appeared Sam himself, sitting there in that huddled way on the green rep sofa! The Lady of Lyons, attired in white satin, and wearing a long cloak of purple velvet, would surely never stoop to take a second look at one so commonplace as he!

Presently Carson found himself gazing at Janey with new eyes, seeing her as an auditor might across a barrier of glittering footlights. It was a talented little face—he had to own that—but also a very sensitive one. Not a line of real aggressiveness, not a hint of latent will power that might enable her to suffer and endure. She was a girl ill adapted to go out into the crowded public ways and wage a solitary struggle for success. Carson knew this well, but realized also that Janey's cardinal fault—an intense personal vanity—was surely, inevitably taking her there, and away from him. He could not refrain from one more protest:

"Janey—the loneliness while you're waiting your chance—have you thought of that? And there are so many dis-



"And so you've quit the Quizzicaloon Girls?" he inquired.

agreeable things you'll have to face—things that a girl brought up in a sweet, sane, home atmosphere has no business to come in contact with. Janey, if you only cared half as much for me as I for you——"

"Oh, I know, of course, that there is a disagreeable side to it all," announced Janey, with the loftiness of complete ignorance. "And I'm prepared to meet it. Oh, I've fully decided, Sam. I'm going to be an actress, and nothing can stop me."

"Very well, then, Janey. Good-by, and good luck!"

Carson left the room so quickly that Janey was startled. As the door closed sharply behind him she sank down in his place on the sofa, and clutched at a pillow which still bore the marks of his tense fingers. For a few moments she

felt very hurt and miserable. He might at least have asked for a farewell kiss, she thought. She had fully made up her mind that if he did ask for it she would not say him nay. His kiss was not at all disagreeable. She knew that it wasn't, because once under the mistletoe at Christmas—and another time in the shadow of the maple at the gate—because it was her birthday—— With a sigh she arose, and went out into the hall. Standing near the door, in front of the empty hatrack, she listened for a possible returning step. She even opened the door slightly to peer down the deserted street.

"Sam, come back!" she sobbed, her heart contracting with a sudden sense of loss.

Halfway up the stairs she paused.

"Sam, come back!" she cried again.

Then it occurred to her, quite naturally, that she must very much resemble *Juliet* on the balcony, as she stood there. She reached her arms out dramatically toward the unresponsive hatrack.

"Farewell!" she cried, in her best Shakespearean manner. "Heaven only knows when we shall meet again!"

Then she leaned over the banister, and looked down into the shadowed hall. Her spirits began to rise. It was the night of her debut as a star, she fancied, and a dark-faced *Romeo*, there below, looked up at his beautiful blond *Juliet*—late of Beakstown, New Jersey—from a moonlit garden of dreams!

A July sight-seeing crowd swayed and sweltered, and wore itself out, tramping up and down in front of the moving-picture shows, fortune-telling booths, rotisserie cubby-holes, devil's slides, freak exhibits, and other features that went to make up the amusement attractions of Beach View, the new Long Island resort.

Through imitation marble gateways, Janey and her escort passed into Beach View's famous open-air Panoramadrome. There they found themselves surrounded by ranges of painted mountains draped over bold skeleton foundations, portions of which protruded here and there in all their carpenter-built, unconvincing rawness. There were spacious Alpine valleys, too, gaudily colored, but with bits of torn surface flapping dejectedly in the persistent salt breeze. Even the imposing white papier-mâché palaces were grown stained and saggy from the never-ending onslaught of wind and weather.

In the middle of the Panoramadrome was a plaster fountain, surrounded by green benches. Janey rushed for the only vacant seat. She stopped for a moment to brush away the unsightly remnants of a paper-box luncheon, then sank down with an exclamation of relief. The vaudeville performer, who accompanied her, cleared the rest of the bench, and took his place beside her.

"You look frayed to a frazzle, Miss Bentley," he remarked, in the easy, slangy way he most affected. "After

you rest a minute or two we'll beat it to a feed joint for some crabs or a hot dog to brace you up!"

Janey thanked him, but declined the offer of refreshment. Whereupon "The Great Blodgett," as he was invariably billed by the vaudeville houses where his "act" happened to be playing, removed the soft hat from its rakish perch over his left ear, ran his fingers through a heavy mop of dark hair, and settled back on his shoulder blades, thoroughly willing to enjoy a restful conversation with the attractive girl beside him.

He was disengaged for a few days, preparatory to starting West for twenty weeks of "Big Time" bookings, and had improved the hours by inviting the prettiest girl at his theatrical boarding house for a day's outing at Beach View.

Janey did not know that The Great Blodgett was married, and she did not have enough interest in him to care whether he was or not. Except that as a matter of home training she did not think it quite proper for a girl to "run around" with a married man. In all probability she would languidly have refused Mr. Blodgett's invitation had she been made previously aware of the existence of a Mrs. Blodgett, now playing her second season of emotional leads with a stock company in Tallahassee.

On his side, the vaudevillian did not feel the slightest qualms of conscience. Through the exigencies of the profession he and his wife saw each other so seldom that they were almost strangers, anyhow, and if he had thought of her at all, it would have been with the hope that she was putting in her time as pleasantly as he was. People can't play a perpetual game of solitaire just because they are actors! That's how in the "profession," the unconventional inevitably becomes a matter of course.

"And so you've quit the Quizzicaloon Girls?" he inquired of Janey, to start the conversation.

"Yes, I was a 'quitter,' as they call it," assented Janey, in a weary voice, "and I'll stay one before I ever start out with a show like that again."

She was very pale, and closed her eyes listlessly as she spoke. Blodgett thought

she looked almost ill. He wondered that she didn't use a little daytime rouge to brighten her appearance a bit. It was up to a girl who was yearning for a chance to shine on Broadway to look her prettiest. He meant to suggest it to her before he started on tour. He straightened his necktie, and pulled up his well-creased striped trousers to keep them from bagging at the knee. He was always dressed as for managerial inspection, or the critical eye of an audience.

"How long were you out with the Quizzicaloons?" he pursued.

Janey's expressive lips curved disgustedly.

"Just two weeks," she said. "That was enough for me! Oh, I was glad enough to take it when it was offered me. It was my first engagement, after hanging on for almost a year, without the hint of one, and I grabbed at it, but I soon saw that I'd rather have nothing at all than that."

"Say, but you're the independent one, all right!" observed he of the striped trousers admiringly. "Nothing less than leads under the management of C. F. will do you, I suppose?"

Janey's gaze traveled toward the peaks of the painted mountains.

"I don't know that I've been expecting that exactly," she said, with slow thoughtfulness, "but I do know that I didn't leave home, and mother, and being thought something of by home folks, and everything and everybody else, just to be numbered among a bunch of half-dressed girls prancing around a coarse, fat comedian who perpetually told his audience we were a job-lot harem he had bought at auction. I wasn't born for that, and I told him so!"

Plainly Miss Bentley had to be broken in to what she had to expect if she remained in the show business.

"N-no, of course, you weren't born for that," Blodgett agreed soothingly; "but a salary is a salary, and few of us ever get to do what we think we're born for. That's why most of us take what others have sized us up as being fit to do. And maybe they're right and we're wrong—who knows?"

A movement of Janey's shoulders showed strong dissent to the view her companion had expressed.

"Now I," continued The Great Blodgett, as he devoured the last of a supply of peanuts, and flung the shells into the plaster fountain, "why, I never have thought for a moment that my mother brought me into the world to be a near-headliner in vaudeville. Don't know whether she'd have considered it worth while or not to nurse me through the croup, and scarlet fever, and the mumps, and the rest of the list, if she could have foreseen my wind-up."

"What is your act? What do you do?" inquired the ex-Quizzicaloon girl, stirred by a faint curiosity.

The answer came as if learned by rote:

"I begin with a pianologue, in which I play the piano, dance a jig, and juggle glass balls simultaneously. Then I do some prestidigitation, and wind up with an illusion in which I disappear while standing in full view of the audience. My stunts 'get over,' so the booking agents think I've found my level just there, and there I stick."

"And that wasn't what you wanted to do in the first place?" asked Janey, with growing curiosity.

"You won't laugh if I tell you what I did want to do?"

"Of course not. It's all too serious a matter with me—this business of getting ahead. Why should I laugh?"

"Well, Miss Bentley, what I really wanted to do was to enter the 'legit,' and play *King Lear*. The idea struck me when I was only a schoolboy. I know every line of the part backward. I used to spout it in my dressing rooms, while waiting to go on, but I've quit that now—because now I realize—at last—that it's time thrown away."

And to Miss Bentley's amazement she found herself thrilling to something in Blodgett's voice—something that bespoke the tragedy of a dishonored king! She looked at him wonderingly, and was impressed with a certain strength, a sort of latent majesty in his firm features. But even while she rested her pitying eyes upon him, he made a quick descent



"You do a bud in the third act—only a 'bit,' but a great chance at that."

into buffoonery. He blew the empty bag into a balloon, and burst it with a loud detonation.

"Hah! Show me the manager who'd believe I could do *Lear*! No, little Quizicaloon, it's me for the glass balls and nimble heels while I last. That's my medicine, and I've learned to take it."

He sprang up to hail a passing popcorn cart, running down the walk after it. It occurred to Janey as she watched him that he was just about Sam Carson's height—broad-shouldered, too, like Sam—like Sam—yet—oh, so different! For there was no one really like Sam in all the world! They might be as tall, or have thick eyelashes, like his, or a deep voice, that somehow reminded her of him, or some little trick of gallantry—

but they weren't Sam! There was only one Sam in all the world! Why hadn't she realized that before it was too late? Miserably she reached into the suède bag she was carrying, and took out a letter—one received from her mother only that morning. Miserably she read for a second time what her mother had written—that Sam was away from Beakstown on a vacation, which gossip said meant his return very shortly with a bride.

"And you wanted to do *King Lear*?" she found herself inquiring woodenly of the vaudevillian, as he came toward her with a stock of "hot-buttered." She had wanted to do *Juliet*, and *Leah the Forsaken*, and *The Lady of Lyons*, and maybe she, too, would meet with utter

disappointment as he had done. Maybe, in time, rather than return home an unconditional failure, she would even come to do a "turn" in vaudeville on roller skates! Yes, from a child she had always been very clever on roller skates—had once won a prize. Her thoughts ended in a shuddering little laugh.

"It's a tough game, all right—the show business," resumed Blodgett, as he spread a paper napkin out on the bench between them, and emptied out a mound of popcorn. "How did you come to get into it in the first place?"

She answered him with strong self-scorn:

"I suppose my ambition sprouted about the time I began to recite 'The Polish Boy,' with my hair in pigtails. But it never bloomed out fully until I acted *Esmeralda* in a town-hall performance for charity. The *County Weekly Gazette* said I was another Maude Adams, only younger and prettier. After that, nothing would do but I must come to New York, and butt my brains out, trying to get on the stage. And here I am! Back there in Beakstown I thought all I had to do was to interview the managers, spout some Shakespeare for them, and pick out the best offer of the lot—oh, I was certain of offers by the dozen—and my triumphs would begin. I didn't realize that not one girl in a thousand ever gets a chance to speak to a manager—let alone recite for him. And these heartbreaking theatrical agencies—where one goes day after day, only to be told there's 'nothing doing!' I get so tired of their perpetual turn-downs, so sick of those managerial office boys, with their perpetual lies, 'The manager is out!' when perhaps you've caught sight of him at his desk half a dozen times when the door opened from your seat on that awful outside bench against the wall!"

"Going to give up and make tracks for home?" inquired her listener laconically.

Her history was such a common one that he could not feel much sympathy for her. Each season he had seen them "make tracks for home" in droves, these stage-struck girls.

Janey thought of the letter inside the suede bag.

"No, I'm not going home. I've got to make good. I can't give up and go back now, for I've lost—what was most worth living for—in Beakstown."

Then, feeling that she was making too much of a confidant of a man who was, after all, a stranger, she sprang up abruptly.

"Let's be going," she said. "I'm rested now."

In front of the headquarters of "The Midget Minstrels" they encountered Mrs. Muldoon, a theatrical agent.

"Why, Miss Bentley, I'm so glad to see you!" she cried, with what impressed Janey as most unaccountable cordiality. "I started to write to you yesterday, but found we didn't have your address. My Miss Spriggs must have failed to enter it." She stooped to tie on the hat of one of the two little girls who were with her. "This is my first day off this summer. My sister's children—these are—from Boston, and I felt I must show them around a bit. But I can't get away from the agency business even here—meeting you proves it!"

She straightened up, and smiled at Janey pleasantly.

"You haven't signed, I presume?"

"I had an engagement," answered Janey, with dignity, for the first time remembering her late experience with the Quizzicaloons with a slight degree of gratitude, "but I have just closed."

Mrs. Muldoon hastily scribbled something on a card, and passed it over.

"Your appointment for to-morrow, eleven a. m., Miss Bentley, to meet Mr. Grapner. He's a new manager, my dear, with millions back of him, and crazy to make good on Broadway. It's a society play. You do a bud in the third act—four or five 'sides'—only a 'bit,' but a great chance at that. Luckily your picture happened to be lying on my desk the day Mr. Grapner called, and he said you were the exact type he wanted."

"But he hasn't heard me read the lines—he doesn't know whether I'll do," stammered the surprised girl timorously.

"Oh, you'll do, all right," stated the agent, with a laugh. "It's appearance

he's after—not ability—and you happen to be an improvement on your photo. Who cares whether a girl as young as you are can act or not? He's not looking for a Bernhardt."

"Hah!" cried the near-headliner, as Mrs. Muldoon and her charges went on in to see "The Midget Minstrels." "So you're to have your chance with the Big Names at last! You're to appear with a real metropolitan cast! The tank-town actresses would be willing to wait years for that, and you've only waited ten months! Why, what's the matter? You look as broken up as if you'd just had your two weeks' notice, instead of running square into luck!"

"I'm trying to be glad," answered Janey, very honestly, "trying hard. But—why couldn't it have come to me before I stopped caring? All the enthusiasm has gone out of me somehow. I guess I'm not very brave—although I always thought I was, back there at home. Anyhow—I don't care anything at all about a New York appearance now. I don't believe I ever shall care again."

"Come take a trip in the submarine!" Over and over a stentorian voice chanted the invitation.

Blodgett and Janey climbed up some steps to a railing, over which they leaned to gaze with the crowd into an artificial lake below.

"Come, take a trip in the submarine! Actual descent to coral caves! Behold the mermaids at the bottom of the sea!"

The announcer—a colored man attired as a Mexican—paused for breath, and pointed with the narrow end of a megaphone toward an imitation submarine, moored alongside of a tiny dock.

Janey shook her head when the vaudevillian invited her jocosely to "take a duck" with him. Her attention was attracted elsewhere.

Blodgett followed her gaze, and saw,



"You really want the swan, Janey?"

in striking contrast to its cheap and incongruous surroundings, a magnificent white swan floating about on the stagnant waters. In its wake, stirred by the rhythmic motion of its jet-black webs, floated scraps of toy balloons, bits of a broken cigar box, peanut shells, and other refuse. As they watched it the swan paddled close to what looked like a cool gray rock, then moved away again in some haste. The tin surface of the rock was hot from an underlying engine, working in the interests of a neighboring attraction.

The margin of the made-to-order lake was covered with thick rope grass of a garish blue-green color. Painted metallic pond lilies spotted the scummy surface here and there. No shady nooks, in the shelter of overhanging trees or

bushes, with succulent swan food, to reward the plunge of the black-and-orange beak into fresh, inviting depths.

Country-bred Janey pityingly imagined the bewilderment of the creature, perpetually imprisoned in this nightmare of a place, and curiously enough found herself comparing the swan's plight with her own. She had come away from "green pastures, beside the still waters," for the painted pools, manufactured verdure, and canvas-spread heavens of a theatrical career. The reality of all she had left, the artificiality of all she had been striving for, suddenly swept over her, and made her heart feel weighted as with chains. She turned away to hide a rush of tears. When she looked again for the swan, it was there, almost under her hand.

"Oh, I can't bear it!" she cried piteously into the ear of the astonished Blodgett, who had supposed her to be as interested as himself in the fake descent of the submarine. "I can't bear to see that unfortunate swan going round and round in this awful place! See! Its eyes look as glazed and dead as painted marbles! What must the poor bird think of it all? Why should any living creature be cheated of a natural life like that? I won't allow him to stay there! I'll buy him, and have him taken away!"

"What?" cried the amused Blodgett. There was a long slide of amazement in his resonant actor voice. "Thinking of introducing a pet swan to your friends? That would be a novelty!"

Janey faced him earnestly.

"I'm not joking, Mr. Blodgett. I want to get that swan away from his present owners—I must! Then I'll have him sent out home to the little lake back of our orchard. There where what he looks at will be real; where he can feed on what he likes, without taking a

chance at dying from the poison in the paint."

But Blodgett was unsympathetic.

"Oh, you'll forget all about the swan by to-morrow, Miss Bentley. What's the use of worrying about him? He looks fat and sassy to me."

"You really want the swan, Janey?"

It was not The Great Blodgett speaking this time. The voice came from the other side of her. Janey's heart gave one mighty throb—then she turned and looked up into Carson's face with startled, questioning, starved blue eyes.

"I called at your boarding house," he said, in answer to that look. "They told me you were here. Of course, I did not really hope to find you—"

Blodgett stepped forward pugnaciously. Was some stranger trying to get fresh with the pretty Quizzicaloon? He discreetly stepped back again, however, when he saw Miss Bentley extend both hands toward the man who had addressed her.

"Do you really—want—the swan?" Carson repeated, somewhat incoherently, stirred beyond belief at the sweet something he saw in Janey's eyes, and fearing that he did not see aright.

Janey thrilled deliciously. She had not lost him! Ah, suddenly she knew she had not lost him! All the foolish gossip in the world could not make her believe it now! She forgot the gaping crowd, forgot The Great Blodgett, her appointment for to-morrow a. m., her chance with the Big Names, what she was going to show people some day, everything but the heaven of this moment that had brought Sam back to her.

When she spoke it was just a tiny, silver thread of a voice, meant for and reaching his ears alone.

"Yes, I do want the swan—the old life—home! But—Sam—most of all—I want you!"





The Old Beau's New Wife

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "The Summer Pleasure Exertion," "The Burden Bearers," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

THE crying need of the time," Jocasta informed me the other afternoon, when I dropped in at her studio, and inquired the cause of her palpable and very unusual depression, "the crying need of our times—do you know what it is?"

I ventured something in regard to a general lessening of the cost of the necessities of life, but Jocasta withered me with a look. I murmured something about restricting immigration, and she said scornfully: "Oh, don't be stupid! I'm in earnest."

I thereupon did what I should have done in the first place. I asked Jocasta to tell me the crying need of our times.

"It's a code," replied Jocasta darkly, "to govern one's words, and looks, and acts, when one meets the wives whom one's old beaus have married."

The answer being unexpected, found me unprepared with the proper rejoinder, but Jocasta, having let down the bars of silence, was quite prepared to go on without the stimulation of question or of retort.

"How many girls do you suppose marry their first beau?" she demanded statistically.

I said truthfully that I supposed about one-millionth of one per cent, but Jocasta would not allow even that. "No girl on earth," she told me stormily, "marries her first beau! It's impossible. Your one-millionth of one per cent may marry the second beau, though even that

is very unlikely. No—the average woman, if she marries, marries about her fourteenth. That means, of course, that for every average woman in the world—in the comfortable, civilized world that marries and is given in marriage, I mean—there are thirteen men who may some day introduce her to the wives they have chosen after they have recovered from her cruelty in throwing them down. Thirteen wives—why, it makes a class by itself, a large and important class!

"I am always reading advice on how to treat the girl that your brother is going to marry, and how to act toward your husband's mother. But think how few girls become your sisters-in-law! Think how few mothers-in-law the customs of our country and the general laws of longevity permit most of us to acquire! It's foolish, faddish, superegratory—to give a girl pages and pages of advice on subjects of such comparatively narrow appeal, while the great, broad, varied question of how to meet your old beau's new wife is untouched in all admonitory literature!"

I asked Jocasta if her experience led her to the joyful belief that a single code could be framed to cover all cases; old beaus presenting such an unexpected, incalculable variety of tastes after their courtship or friendship with one's self was ended. And Jocasta sternly informed me that a code was not a simple rule, but a set of rules.



"How many girls do you suppose marry their first beau?" she demanded statistically.

"It is, of course, not an uncomplicated matter, like whether or not to drink one's tea from a saucer," she admitted. "It is more delicate and difficult than that; but until the code is formulated, I declare I am half inclined to keep in seclusion."

I pointed out to Jocasta that not all women had so many new wives to contend with, not having had so many dangers to their credit, but she denied this.

"Of course, by beau I don't mean a man who has proposed for one in due form," she explained. "I may even mean nothing more ardent, nothing more matrimonially minded, than a comfortable man friend. If you imagine that the woman a plain, easy-going, old

friend marries is any less of a problem to one than the woman whom the man marries who was going to shoot himself or go to perdition or something on your account—why, you're mistaken. The wife of any man who has ever played any part in our life is going to be a problem to us when the time comes for meeting her. And I insist that there should be an accepted code to help us out."

Then Jocasta arose, and looked aimlessly for the matches, and started the blaze under the kettle, and shook the Sheffield caddy to see if there was enough tea to brew a satisfactory cup, and peered into her biscuit tin behind the dull gold, brocaded Japanese curtains, and murmured relief at finding plenty to eat. And when she had set forth her viands, she resumed her discourse.

"Each time I think the new type is the worst type," she remarked, between sips of orange pekoe. "But to-day I met the really-and-truly, black-and-bluely worst kind of all. Do you remember a man named Warren that used to be around the studio a lot

about four or five years ago? Yes, of course you do. I don't see now how I stood him, but I remember I thought at the time that there was a lot in him. He used to read his stuff to me—poetry and formless ravings that I believe he called philosophy. He was going to be the Maeterlinck of the United States of America, or something in that line.

"My dear, what a lot of boredom a girl lets herself in for through being kind-hearted! But that's neither here nor there. He went to Germany, and wrote me some of the longest letters ever penned, and I was so glad that he was gone—and I suppose so flattered at what he called my influence on his work—that I wrote quite longish ones myself

in reply. For a few months, I mean. Then the correspondence dwindled and died a natural death.

"He never was in love with me, you understand—never wanted to marry me, or anything of that sort. He couldn't have married any one then—he had the income of a church mouse. Well, by and by somebody died, and he came into a little money, and he went home to whatever place he hailed from, and there he married him a wife. And they've come to New York. And I, martyr to social conventions that I am, went to call on her to-day. I've met the really worst type—I have at last!"

"Jealous?" I inquired, reaching for another biscuit.

"Jealous?" Jocasta echoed, with annihilating scorn. "If she only were! If she only hated me, regarded me with suspicion, believed that I wanted to destroy her happiness, to play the serpent in her little two-by-four Eden! Oh, no, not at all! She's sentimental about me—sentimental! What do you think of that?"

"Not so flattering as jealousy, perhaps," I hazarded, "but not so very objectionable."

"Wait till you meet one of that sort!"

Jocasta seemed to threaten me with some unspeakable doom. "Wait! My dear, she 'doesn't want to stand between her Gerald and me'—doesn't want to stand between us! He 'has told her all about our wonderful friendship, and she is not so small-minded that she cannot appreciate it! She is 'not going to be a barrier between us, only she hopes that she may be sometimes a quiet sharer in our wonderful intercourse!' Oh, did you ever hear such piffle? She 'didn't marry Gerald to impoverish his life—only to add another element of richness to it—and so she was going to beg her coming not to make any difference in our wonderful friendship! She thought she was talking the most high-minded, transcendentalist stuff—she didn't know it was pure guff. And I—of course, if the man had made her think that sort of thing, I couldn't be so brutal as to reply: 'Really, my dear Mrs. Warren, you have a very exaggerated notion of my ac-

quaintance with your husband.' I couldn't do that. A platonic triangle is what that silly little person sees in the future. Well, she has another look coming!"

Jocasta frowned for a minute to emphasize her slang, and then drifted off into a fit of musing.

"The jealous new wife is always a type incomprehensible to me," she observed, with a confidential air. "Yet I think she's almost the most frequent form that the new wife takes. She eyes you askance. You can see that she is saying: 'She certainly hasn't a good figure, and John hates untidiness—how could he endure those clothes?—I suppose she calls them artistic! The Fosters said that she was good-looking, but for my part I can't see it. She has awfully brusque manners—she isn't what I should call a womanly woman at all. I suppose she worked on John's loneliness or his pity or his chivalry—anything she thought would prove useful in attracting him. She shan't see much of him in the future—that I'll see to!'"

"That's the way the jealous new wife casts you up, and looks you over. Apparently the fact that her John chose her after having survived the battery of your charms doesn't reassure her in the least. Do you know, that is one of the most wonderful things in the world to me—that wives seem to feel so insecure a tenure of their husbands, some of them! What means did they use to get their spouses to the altar, if they can think of them as striving to break away, as ready to follow any lure, new or old? I dunno."

Again Jocasta mused, her chin upon her palm, and then a smile broke across her face.

"The provincial ones are funny, aren't they?" she demanded. "Like the queer little thing Jim Preble married. Jim lived next door to me in Worcester, Mass., when we were youngsters. I knew the day on which his mother made doughnuts, and I always showed up at the Prebles' kitchen door about the time they were coming out of the fat. And Jim was as well acquainted with my mother's gingerbread

day. We had lived side by side, and fought every day for six years when Jim was sent off to a school somewhere, and I didn't see him again until we ran across each other in New York. He was awfully glad to see some one from Worcester, Mass.—tastes are queer things, as the philosopher said!—and I was glad to see Jimmy.

"And he used to drop in a lot, both here at the studio and up home. He liked mother a lot better than he did me, and would have thought of marrying a Choctaw squaw as soon as of marrying me. Well, his paper sent him off to start another in Cleveland or somewhere, and he's been gone for two or three years. And now he turns up with a dear little, pink-cheeked, tight-haired Mrs. Jimmy in tow. And I fall over

myself to be cordial and intimate. And Mrs. Jimmy puts me in my place neatly by referring to 'Mr. Preble' whenever I say 'Jimmy'! It isn't that she's jealous, you know; she's got too much sense under that smooth, tight coiffure of hers. But she just isn't going to allow any of these indiscriminate intimacies; she doesn't think they make for a stable, proper, married life. That made me sorry—I did like Jimmy's mother's doughnuts!

"And then," pursued Jocasta when she had sighed again over Mrs. Jimmy Preble's severe, arm's-length treatment of her, "and then, I want the code to state exactly how one should take the new wife's almost invariable remark: 'Clarence or Pat or Adolphus or Mortmorenci has told me all about you, and about your friendship.' Has Clarence done anything of the sort? Has Pat mentioned that the last time he saw you you ejected him from the studio for being maudlin and trying to kiss you? Has Adolphus really and truly let Mrs. Adolphus know that he used to propose to you every Thursday evening, when he brought you home from the theater club's meeting? I have serious doubts about Clarence, and Pat, and the rest of them. I don't think they've told their new wives all about you and their friendship with you.

"Do you want to know what I think they have told their nice, little missuses—by implication, by silence, by a laugh, if not in words? I think that half the time



"Each time I think the new type is the worst type," she remarked, between sips of orange pekoe.

they've told those dear, confiding women that you were awfully 'gone' on them, and that, of course, they liked you a lot—as a friend, and that the studio was a nice, comfortable place to drop into, and that they used to drop in—until they saw that you thought they meant something by it! Then, of course, they stopped! Kind, chivalrous souls! I believe that is what Clarence and Pat and Adolphus tell their new wives when they are required to explain you. Not in words, of course—at least, I suppose not. And the only thing that makes it endurable is the fact that another set of Clarences et al are telling their new wives precisely the same things about *your* Mrs. Clarence and Mrs. Et Al."

Feebly I came to the rescue of old beaus. I said I didn't believe them capable of such duplicity, such caddishness. Men who could be guilty of such conduct, I said, would surely have shown their hideous natures long before, and would never have attained any degree of friendship with one. But Jo-casta was inflexible.

"Perhaps they aren't quite so bald and blatant as I have made them out," she conceded; "but they're not so very far from it—the best of them. You may reject a man nine times, but after a year or two he will be quite sure that you would have been mighty glad to accept him had he proposed the tenth time. He suspects you of regrets. So that they aren't just plain liars when they let their new wives get the impression that you are eating your young



"She thought she was talking the most high-minded, transcendentalist stuff."

heart out, regretting them—they're self-deluded.

"No, I don't believe they ever tell Jane and Dora all about one, and about their friendship with one—they tell Jane and Dora something quite different, that they have made themselves believe first. Of course, they tell Jane and Dora with great gusto how you used to make mud pies together; but they haven't told Jane or Dora about the time they came to you and wept real tears because the haughty Lady Imogens of their first romances had spurned them; or how they told you, on that occasion, that they had only the ashes of a love left to offer any woman, and that you deserved more than that; but that if you would take it, it was yours, and that perhaps in time you and they could jog on not too miserably together! They never told the new wives that, did they?"

"Or about the time they were mak-

ing themselves absurd, hanging about the stage entrances, and how you pulled them up by giving them a new interest in life. Or how they borrowed money from you when they were 'broke,' or if they ever had you read them a genuine temperance lecture!—I think that in the code, when we formulate it, we'll count that 'Clarence has told me all about you and the good times you used to have together' as a mere idle form meaning: 'Clarence has told me just what he thinks it best for me to know about you, plus a little bit that he has imagined since he stopped seeing you.'"

"Will there be anything in the code," I inquired, "in the nature of advice to the ladies whose old beaux are married?"

"There will, indeed!" cried Jocasta enthusiastically. "There will be many rules. As, for example: 'Never accuse the supplanter of rousing.' 'Never accuse her of being loud, or noisy, or vulgar, or extravagant, or a dullard, or an echo.' 'Never, in short, accuse her of any disagreeable traits.' For—observe! To reflect upon the old beau's new wife is to reflect upon one's self. He used to admire one's self. Did his taste run in those days to rouged damsels, to dyed hair, to noisy, vulgar persons? Has he always been capable of admiring the tawdry and meretricious?"

"One must not flatter one's self that she can escape the inevitable conclusion in the mind of her listener, if she begins to abuse the new wife of the old beau; either a rancorous, uncontrollable jealousy is making her say what is not so, see what does not exist—or the young man was always a person with a predilection for the common or the dull—that will be the verdict. 'Don't imagine,' I shall instruct all the old feminine friends when I issue the code, 'that you can safely infer that his taste has changed for the worse, or that he is the duped victim of wiles so palpable that only a lunatic could fail to recognize them for what they are; he is probably much more of a man now than when you knew him in his callow, salad days; he is showing more business judgment, more sense in amusements, more ac-

men in sizing up his masculine associates. Why should imbecility develop only in his choice of women to admire?"

"No—even though you know that the girl is a combination of a termagant and a simpleton; even though you know that there is scarcely a feature of her face which is her own by natural right, even though you know that she hasn't an idea in her silly little pate except how to hoodwink a man, don't say so! Say that Jim's new wife is charming; that John's new wife seems a splendid girl, well fitted to make him happy; that Robert's is delightful! Thus shall you escape the imputation of cattiness!"

"Jocasta," I asked her, "did you ever know any one who was the sort of new-wife-of-an-old-beau that you really admired, whose manner was just right, even in the embarrassing moment of her first meeting with you?"

"Yes, I knew a girl who swung it just right once," she replied, with that idiomatic use of English for which she is renowned. "She had nice, twinkling blue eyes, and the corners of her mouth went up in little dimples. And she shook hands with a warm, cordial clasp, and she looked at one as though she was saying: 'Yes, I've heard about you—they said that he was in love with you once! Well, I don't wonder! But he's fallen in love with me since, and it's the real thing, and I'm not jealous of his past or afraid of the future. And I'd like to be friends with you!' That was the way she looked, and that was the way she shook hands; and she didn't tell me that 'he' had told her all about me, or that she didn't want to break up our wonderful friendship, or that she wouldn't tolerate any free-and-easiness of first names between us. She was just simple, and straightforward, and fine. I'd like to hire her to give lessons to every bride."

"One thing more, Jocasta," I asked her, as she began to put away the tea things, "do you suppose that men ever give half an hour's thought to the proper way of meeting the husbands whom their old flames have chosen?"

"Ah!" sighed Jocasta. "But men have real things to consider!"

WHEN BILLIE INSURGED



(D)

ELLA
PERRY
MIDGLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

OBVIOUSLY, the factor which really decided Billie's fate was Comanche. Of course, Comanche was merely the instrument of the goddess Fate, for no trail-trained, safe-and-sane ranch horse would—but I will set down the facts, and you may judge for yourself.

"That sure is going to be some storm!"

The speaker stood at his cabin window, high up on Tamarack Ridge, watching the great, menacing, blue-black pall of cloud boiling up from behind the white-cowled mountain peaks. Lightning zigzagged almost continuously across the heavens, and thunder boomed, and rumbled, and bellowed among the hills—reverberating through the gorges and cañons; the wind shrieked and lashed the patriarchal, lancelike firs and tamaracks to frenzy.

Suddenly, during a slight lull of the tumult, a sound, strange to that isolated, little-traveled location, came to the man—the whinny of a horse! A horse on Tamarack Ridge at that hour meant that there was a human being out there in the deadly storm.

Snatching his hat from a near-by peg, the man rushed to the little porch, and gave the whoo-whoop call used everywhere in the mountains. He listened tensely; and presently, through the storm din, he heard a faint response—in a woman's voice! Fairly gasping with astonishment—for Tamarack Ridge and the wild, dangerous, contiguous territory was distinctly and emphatically a man's country—he repeated the call. Again the answer came. This time more distinct and nearer.

The man strode swiftly down the trail in the direction from which the sound came. When about fifty rods from the cabin, he made out the dim, indistinct shape of a horse and rider, cantering briskly toward him through the weird, ghostly, twilight gloom. Just as the rider reached him and drew up, a vivid flash of lightning illuminated both faces. A soft laugh—sweet, girlish, and infectious—greeted the young man. But one girl in the world laughed in just that way. That one girl he had not seen in five years. Moreover, during the preceding month, he had made

heroic—and successful—efforts to avoid meeting that same young woman.

"Howdy, Jimmy?" said a charming voice as the young woman slipped easily to the ground and extended a hand to him.

"Billie Winthrop! What in Heaven's name are you doing on Tamarack Ridge at this time—" Large, scattered drops of rain began to pelt them. "Come! We must make a run for my cabin. Give me your hand."

He caught up the horse's rein, and, grasping the girl's hand, they scampered wildly cabinward, and plunged in just as the rain commenced to fall in torrents.

Breathless, the girl sank into a big, rug-covered chair before a blazing wood fire, and smiled up at the man with shining, dancing blue eyes and wild-rose cheeks.

"This seems a bit from the good old past, doesn't it, Jimmy? I wonder how many times, in the auld lang syne, you and I, hand in hand, entered divers and various places in this charmingly reposed, dignified manner," she said laughingly, between breaths.

"The thing is decidedly reminiscent," he assented unsmilingly. Memories of "the good old past" were thronging upon him, causing a vicious ache to flame up in his heart.

As he lighted the lamp his mind flashed back to the day when big-hearted John Winthrop—Billie's father—had gathered him, a small, forlorn, doubly orphaned lad, up in his big arms and taken him to the Winthrop home; and, because of the lifelong, Damon-and-Pythias friendship that had existed between the lad's father and John Winthrop, had surrounded him with the love and consideration that a son of the house would have received had there been one.

Later, when Billie appeared upon the scene, the boy thought her the most exquisite little creature the world had ever known. The first glance from her blue baby eyes enslaved him. She crept into and filled his boyish heart—and always she had held the place.

The little daughter of the house was christened Wilhelmina Stuyvesant Winthrop, which the lad had not deemed half splendid enough for so superior a bit of humanity. When the infant had been the helpless possessor of the distinguished cognomen just twenty-four hours, the cowboys on the big Montana ranch—every man jack of whom was her voluntary vassal—had, in a session of the whole, pruned the name to simple "Billie," upon the ground that it was "the consensus of opinion that it was a durned shame to make a wee little blue-eyed mite of a she crittur lug around a full-grown maverick brand like that there one!"

The man remembered now—with pity for that boy—how fiercely and passionately he had rebelled. How with hot, passionate tears in his eyes and boyish hands clenched mutinously he had gone to Andy, the "boss," and demanded that he forbid the desecration; for to the lad it was all of that. And the "boss" had merely laughed good-naturedly at him. So "Billie" the infant became. And "Billie" she had remained.

During the following years, that little girl became the tireless, enthusiastic companion of many a tramp, and hunt, and ride, a warm-hearted, square, matter-of-fact little mortal, beloved of all who knew her; and he, a great hulking lad, had constituted himself her guide, and mentor, and protector, and first aid in everything, and worshiped, and bullied, and petted, and browbeat, and indulged, and scolded; and at any time, in all those years, would willingly have laid down his life for her, if necessary.

Hand in hand they had roamed, and ridden, and laughed about the ranch, and these hills and plains. But things had changed, he was telling himself bitterly. Since those "good old past" days, she had left the ranch; gone East to school. She had inherited a fortune from a maternal aunt, become a popular member of Gotham's smartest set, and was engaged to be married to the dollar lord who was now visiting at the Bar-W Ranch—Billie's home. He did not care to pursue the subject further—even mentally.

"Would you mind telling me what the deuce you are doing alone on Tamarack Ridge, five miles from the ranch, at this hour of the evening, in a storm that not a man on the divide would voluntarily venture out in?"

"Why," said the girl, still somewhat breathless, "I rode over to Echo Cañon to see Daddy McCabe. I stayed a little longer than I had intended to, and I decided to take the short cut through Devil's Gulch. But Comanche turned into a side trail, and I lost all idea of my location; so I just gave him his head, and here I am, and here you are, and there is the storm," as the rain seemed to come down in a solid stream, and the heavy thunder rattled the cabin windows and almost deafened them with its angry bellow.

"You can't imagine how relieved I was, Jimmy, to discover that it was your cabin that I had happened upon. I hadn't the remotest notion whether Comanche was taking me to an Indian village, to the camp of train robbers that they say is here in the hills, or to the crazy hermit's shack. Comanche, however, seemed to understand what he was doing—so I just threw the reins to Fate, and found you!"

"Comanche has been here before. Are you wet?"

"My coat is a trifle damp. If you don't mind, I think I'll take it off and hang it over a chair to dry."

"By all means."

"Ugh! But I'm glad I'm here instead of out there," as the tempest howled.

"Yet your being here, instead of out there, is a mere accident. I see you haven't changed. You're just the same reckless, irresponsible creature! Since you were able to walk, you've always gone skyhooting off on these personally conducted trips, blundering into blind trails that led to any old place and danger. You've always gone whizzing and bumping about like a crazy beetle or a disoribited comet. And nobody ever can tell what a crazy beetle or an unknown, wild-eyed comet will do next. You ought to be placed under restraint. But"—with a dreary sigh of resigna-

tion—"one might as well try to dam the waters of Lethe as to try to control your actions!"

For the moment he had forgotten everything but that here was Billie; that she had done a reckless, foolish thing; and that, obviously, his first duty was to scold her as in the old days, when he had constantly inveighed against her wild recklessness.

"I've always been a sort of white man's burden to you, haven't I, Jimmy?" sighed the young woman meekly. "Poor boy! I should think you'd feel that you've lived in vain."

An eloquent shrug of the shoulders was his only reply.

"I've not had any supper," he said, removing his wet coat and slipping on a somewhat dilapidated plaid smoking jacket. "You haven't, either, of course. If you'll join me I'll—"

"Oh!" she breathed. "I'm so glad you suggested it, for I am almost famished, Jimmy! This mountain air certainly does whet the appetite."

Billie watched him roll his sleeves up to his elbows, showing the strong, muscular forearm, as brown as a hazelnut. As he moved about in the firelight, she noted the athletic splendor of his six-foot-two figure; lithe, strong, and straight as a young fir, and said to herself that he was a study in plastic art come true; satisfying and altogether admirable.

And when he stooped, on the hearth before her, to place the coffeepot on a bed of live coals, she smiled down fondly upon his head. She always had loved his hair—the thick, crisp, virile, close-clipped brownness of it. As she looked at the old, familiar wave at his temples, she felt an almost irresistible impulse to stoop and lay her cheek against it, as she had many times done in the "good old past." The set of his head and neck reminded her of the Praxiteles Hermes.

"Mr. James Montgomery Seward, you have allowed four weeks to pass without having darkened the Bar-W doors, and this is my first visit West in five years. The boys on the ranch—every single one of them but you—met



Just as the rider reached him and drew up, a vivid flash of lightning illuminated both faces.

me at the station, and extended me a royal welcome, bless them! Every one but you, Jimmy. What have you to say for yourself, sir?"

"I am guilty of whatever you say," he said very humbly, measuring out some coffee and putting it into the coffee-pot.

"Inasmuch as you disregarded my command to dine with us at the ranch last Sunday, I find you guilty of lese majesty; and your punishment shall be——"

"I plead guilty!" he said abjectly.

"and I throw myself on the mercy of the court!"

"If you can advance any extenuating reasons——" she suggested severely.

"I have been so very busy," he said, without looking at her. "I am putting down a shaft on my claim, and——"

"And I suppose that wonderful, precious pay streak they tell me you've struck would get away if you were to leave it for an hour or two?" She regarded him a moment with softening, reminiscent eyes; and then said, with a sudden little, warm vibration in her tone: "Never mind! I forgive you, Jimmy, simply because—you are you, and for old sake's sake, and——" Her eyes finished the sentence; but, alas! he was burying some potatoes in the hot ashes to bake, and missed the message.

"And?" he queried, noting the pause and looking up.

"There 'ain't nary nuther and," as Hank would say," she replied, rather hastily. "Phew! But that coffee does smell good, Jimmy. To paraphrase Duncan's eulogy of Macbeth's home:

"This cabin hath a pleasant smell; the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto my hungry sense.

And my 'sense' is so hungry, Jimmy, that I seem to be just a bedraggled frock filled with a gaunt, female entity which is animated by just one big, palpitating desire—to eat!"

"You'll not have to wait much longer," said the young man.

"Why, James Montgomery, you deserve a place in the culinary Temple of Fame!" eying hungrily the beautifully browned corn bread in the iron baker

on the coals which he had just uncovered. "Who would have suspected you of being what Marion Harland terms 'kitchen-minded'? And who would have dreamed that you were such a high priest of the bake oven and the coffee-pot? Still," eying him appraisingly, "I really don't believe the Creator ever intended you for a cook! Why don't you get married, Jimmy?"

"Married!" Jimmy stared. "Me?"

"You're calloused, Jimmy," laughed the girl. "Some untoward influence has substituted one of your new nuggets for the human heart you used to possess."

"Why should I marry? And whom?" prodding the potatoes viciously to see if they were baked.

"The Bible—or was it Shakespeare?—says it is not good for man to be alone and do his own cooking; as to whom—well, Mother Nature is said to provide a Jill for every Jack; and then there is—myself," she said, still laughing. He did not see the challenge in her eyes.

"You!" with fine scorn and the liberty of a very old friend. "You incorrigible little flirt! Why, you are the living Exhibit A—the—nth power of concentrated, double-distilled fickleness! You're engaged to several poor dubs now, according to rumor."

Billie's eyes were limpid blue wells of innocence undefiled.

"It was ever thus," she said meekly. "My innocent attempts to be nice to my fellow man always have been misunderstood—"

"Misunderstood!" He uttered the word as though it were an opprobrious term of fearful devastating power—a sort of pariah, Gila monster, or rattlesnake of language at which strong men blanch and tremble. "You little whited sepulcher! Why, your victims belt the earth!"

Then he turned a pair of censorious but very presentable shoulders upon her, and unscrewed the cover from a jar of wild honey, which he placed upon the table.

"Oh!" with modest deprecation. "You flatter me, Jimmy, enormously; indeed you do! Why, you seem to

fancy that the whole universe east of the divide is one vast, enchanted forest in which the entire male population represents the lions of fable, with poor, humble me as their solitary pursuit! And that impression is quite entirely erroneous. Even if it were true, however, I think you might be a trifle less obviously censorious," with martyr-like humility. "For a real sociological—or is it psychological?—highbrow recently proclaimed to a waiting world that the mere fact of loving a good woman makes a man better before he realizes it—gives him an unconscious uplift, as it were. It seems that a good woman is a sort of mental or moral or spiritual disinfectant, or antiseptic—or is it anesthetic? In my case there have been but a couple or so—and consider my beneficent influence over them! Think of the uplift, Jimmy!"

She broke off, tucked her face in her hands, and laughed consumedly at his shocked, indignant face as he looked up from turning the bear steak on the spit.

"For the love of Mike!" His amazement was staccato. "Of all the condensed, sublimated nerve! 'Only a couple or so!' Why, for four years your engagements have been staple occurrences—publishable in set form, like baseball scores and the receipt of wheat at Chicago. You count that day lost when you don't have a proposal of marriage! You slay your poor victims as the Persians were mowed down by the Greeks at Marathon. You have a larger collection of unhappy masculine hearts pinned up in that specimen cabinet of yours than any other young woman of your age that ever came out of the West."

"Now, wouldn't that sting sharper than a serpent's tooth?" murmured Billie, in a plaintive aside to the Navaho blanket that hung on the wall.

"Your deportment is absolutely scandalous!" he continued, ignoring the interruption. "You ought to be suppressed by law."

"Why, Jimmy!" Billie's expression was that of an angel—a sweet, innocent, little white angel—who hears sacrilege. * "And you," Jimmy scorned; "you

have the immeasurable audacity to pose as a moral reformer—you, with your flighty fickleness and—and frivolity! Now, on the square, do you think you're a very good woman, Billie?"

"Now, on the square, do you think I'm a very bad un, Jimmy?" she parried, with bland, inimitable impertinence and a distracting flash of small, white teeth, and dimples, and eyes closed until they seemed to be no more than wicked, twinkling blue slits.

In sheer self-defense he looked away from her. And he did not answer—for he neither knew nor cared whether she was good or bad. He knew surely just one vital, gripping thing; that he loved her just as she was—hopelessly, irrevocably, eternally!

After a moment of silence, the young man asked, with the air of merely wishing to promote conversation:

"How long is that flossy visitor going to be at the ranch? And who is he?"

The girl threw him a swift, inquisitive glance, while a fleeting, cryptic smile played about her lips.

"He is Mr. Percival Van Voris Fairfax, from Philadelphia—one of the Fairfaxes, you know."

"I'm afraid there was nothing about him in my school history," he said, in a politely regretful tone, breaking some eggs into a bowl to scramble.

"How absurd!" said Billie.

"Isn't it? But perhaps I had an expurgated edition," beating the eggs furiously. "He's parlor broke and table trained, I reckon?" politely.

The girl smiled at his colloquialisms.

"Of course! And he's a genuine Who's Who; and so heavily ancesored that he is eligible to about every early-arrival society there is; for the Fairfaxes, it seems, came over with that original colonial sideboard—"

"Of which eight-thousand-and-thirty-three authentic specimens have been discovered in New England alone, and then—"

"And," continued Billie, ignoring the interruption, "he is so highly pedigreed that his family chart looks like one of those tables—or whatever you call them

—that the financial reviews print showing the fluctuations of the market. He has a Greek renaissance face, and soulful eyes, and oodles and oodles of money—a whole flock, a drove, a *herd* of millions!"

"With the usual accompaniment, I suppose—a reputation that needs formaldehyde," observed Jimmy pleasantly.

"You cave man!"

The impromptu chef gravely put down the coffepot into which he was pouring a few drops of cold water to "settle" it—the coffee, not the pot. Straightening himself to his full six-two, he smoothed his ruffled hair with his left hand, placed his right hand in the breast of his disreputable old jacket, and with ponderous gravity and a spread-eagle flourish of his left hand he bowed in ironical, exaggerated acknowledgment of the compliment.

"Patrick Henry hurling defiance to tyranny!" giped Billie, laughing.

She understood his contempt for a man like the exotic Percy Fairfax. Though ancesored and educated in the East, Jimmy Seward was a young man typical of the West; red corpuscled, with a passion for horses, and dogs, and the hunt saturating his veins. He loved the country for its big, splendid freedom, its vast horizons, its wide, toil-some, dangerous sports; and for its good, hard, healthful, clean toil, too. Billie thought of the visitor at the ranch. At this moment—if he had found himself alone with her—he would have been telling her that she was the handsomest, most alluring woman since Cleopatra. How different this young man. She liked the difference; and, with a warm rush of feeling, she recognized in Jimmy's impersonal manner the clean code of the West as applied to the treatment of the lone woman by man.

"Now, sit thee," said the host when everything was on the little crude table. "I'm not at all presentable," he said apologetically, eying his old jacket deprecatingly.

"Never mind," said Billie, smiling radiantly up at him. "Neither Cæsar



"Now, sit thee," said the host when everything was on the little rude table.

nor Alexander wore a dinner coat. Besides, I'm home folks, you know."

He threw another log on the fire before he sat down; and a shower of golden, crackling sparks went whisking gayly up the chimney.

"How cozy this is," said Billie. "It reminds me of the Christmas scene in 'Pickwick,' with the heart of the picture a great roaring log fire. This is an hour to rest long in the memory. It's worth getting lost in the storm and being scared out of a year's growth for. It's like the 'blowing of old breezes and the ringing of old bells,' as Uriah Heep said, to see you again, Jimmy."

"It's bully!" Jimmy breathed fervently. Then he remembered—and chilled.

"I feel a trifle dazed, as though I were walking in my sleep," Billie continued. "All this"—she waved her hand at the table, the fire, and her host—"seems too good to be true. I feel Cin-

derellalike, as if you were a benevolent fairy, and had waved your magic wand and produced yourself, and——"

"I don't know that I like to be called any kind of a fairy," protested the young man; "sounds sort of—er—effeminate and ethereal, doesn't it?"

Billie gazed at his strong, masculine features and big, muscular shoulders, and laughed softly:

"You certainly don't look the part."

With one of the kaleidoscopic changes that made her so attractive, the girl said gravely, after listening a moment to the raging tempest:

"How much I have to be thankful for this night! And what a debt I owe you, Jimmy! Think how many times you have saved my life; for I've always gravitated toward trouble as the sparks fly upward, haven't I?"

"Well, you sure were a reasonably busy and resourceful kid."

His tone sounded cold because he was

trying to keep it steady. He sat there, outwardly as tight and serene as a Chinese joss; though, really, he was being garroted, guillotined, drawn, and quartered. That look in her glorious eyes was playing havoc with him.

"I'd offer you some fresh cream for your coffee if I had some; but I've nothing but 'condensed,'" he said, in a hurried, harried manner.

Billie laughed outright.

"That reminds me of the chapter in my natural history headed: 'Crows in Greenland,' the first chapter of which commenced: 'There are no crows in Greenland.' Anyhow, your 'condensed' is fine; the coffee is delicious. In fact, my good host, all of this food tastes strangely, delightfully Olympian. And I'm as happy and satisfied as little Jack Horner with his Christmas pie."

She looked across at her "good host" with a vast contentment shining in her amazingly blue, black-lashed eyes.

Meanwhile, her "good host" was sweating blood in the effort to keep an impassive equilibrium. With her—the one Her in all his world—sitting across from him at his table in that intimate manner, he was looking the alluring, glorious Might-Have-Been squarely in the face. And the vision was searing his soul like an acid.

"Oh, ye gods of things as they are, why can't it last, why *can't* it last?" he groaned to himself.

"Jimmy," she was saying, "this is the most delicious corn bread I ever ate; and the potatoes are heavenly, and the steak is a dream!"

He smiled dryly at her extravagance, and said:

"I'm glad you are pleased with my modest efforts."

"Pleased! Why, if this were Aladdin's palace, roc's eggs and all, I couldn't be more completely charmed with it."

As they left the table and her host placed her chair in a comfortable place before the fire, he said:

"What shall I do to amuse you? Play bean bag or hearts, or Old Maid or euchre, or——"

"Let's talk," said Billie.

"Talk it is. About what? The glacial man, aviation, the tariff on lumber, the harem skirt, grand opera, suffragism?"

"Sit right down here on the rug, Jimmy, and be comfy. And then I—I want you to advise me—about something, just as you used to."

The young man drew a chair from the table and placed it quite at the other end of the hearth.

"No, sit down here—beside me, Jimmy, please, as you used to; and let's go back to the Dear Land of Other Days just for to-night," she pleaded.

He groaned inwardly, and wirelessly a prayer to the Fates for help. Then he folded himself into his smallest proportions, and sat unwillingly—with quite obvious unwillingness—his hands clenched rebelliously. How *could* a fellow—she had no business to be so soft and sweet—and so Billielike; especially when, so far as she was concerned, this whole incident meant nothing more than a vagrant, whimsical, accidental hour. He was merely an excrescence on her scheme of life—if he was anything at all. And this—well, it hurt.

"Won't you smoke while we talk? I don't mind, you know," she said.

"Thank you."

While he took a cigar from his case and lighted it, she studied his face gravely. It was like a mask. Again, a nebulous doubt that had nagged her during the past month, and which she had tried passionately to put away, assailed her. Suddenly her eyes darkened with some strong emotion, and a vivid scarlet flamed in her cheeks.

"I have wanted so to see you, Jimmy," she said casually. "I'm troubled about—something—and I want you to help me, if you will. You always were my big-brother-father-confessor, you know. Do you remember?"

Did he remember! Many times he had sworn savagely at himself for not being able to forget. *Did he remember!* He nodded. He was smoking furiously to stimulate an imperturbability that he did not feel.

"I have no one else to go to, Jimmy.

Aunt Margaret is a dear, but she has forgotten that she was ever young, and she never has had a daughter of her own; so she can't help me in this. Uncle Will would simply treat the matter as a joke; and it *isn't* a joke. And I'd like you to advise me just as you would a sister or—or a daughter."

That *was* good, very, *very* good! He was just seven years her senior!

"While I didn't feed Methusaleh his baby food or go into Noah's ark along with the rest of the animals," Jimmy observed impassively, his cigar clenched savagely in his strong, white teeth, his eyes on the fire, "I reckon I've arrived at years of discretion enough to understand anything you may wish to say to me. And you needn't squander this court's time in arguing that I'm the proper person for you to come to. I concede the point, especially as I'm the original trouble buster. In a matter of that sort I am the eye that never sleeps. I'm always on the job. When the trouble tree sheds its fruit, you will always find me in the exact spot where it is falling thickest, tucking a goodly number of the finest specimens away in my jeans just for the sport of pulpifying them. So proceed. But first—I don't want to cut in on anybody's private wire, but—who is he? For, of course, there's a man cached somewhere in the background. But let me get this thing straight. Are—are you engaged now—at this precise moment?"

He spoke in his most impersonal tone. At least, Billie *hoped* he possessed no tone more impersonal than the one he was employing.

"No. I'm not engaged." Something in her tone made him turn and look at her. "Moreover, if ever I become engaged, it will be for all time."

"Just what do you mean by that?" he queried, puzzled by that new note in her voice. "Do you mean that you have 'met your fate'—as a novelist would put it?"

"Yes. And, Jimmy, my 'fate' doesn't—er—respond; while I"—she averted her face—"well, it's a genuine, old-fashioned, sure-enough case with me."

"Aha! Retribution has claimed you

for its prey! Serves you jolly well right, too!" he exulted. "Think how, for years, you've been juggernauting over masculine hearts, ruthlessly mangling and flattening them out and vivisectioning them! And think how you've kept those wretches on the anxious seat! It's right and proper that you should have to take a dose of your own medicine; and I hope it will be big and bitter——"

"Stop, Jimmy! You—you hurt!"

A little tremor in her voice made him look up quickly. She met his glance—and he got the surprise of his life! Her sensitive lips were trembling like those of a little child before it breaks into a sob, and real trouble shone in her wistful, wet, blue eyes.

"Well!" ejaculated the amazed young man. "You *do* seem to have got your wires crossed for fair. Still—are you sure?"

"Not quite; but—practically so."

"Well, hasn't it occurred to you that this high-muck-amuck that you've gone dippy over is bound to—um—lay his cards on the table—in time?"

"In time! That's just the crux of the matter. I can't wait. I've got to *know*! If ever you fall in love, Jimmy, and pass through the awful deeps of not knowing—but, then, *you* never *will*! You're a *man*! You can ask! Oh, I think it's abominable that convention says to a woman: 'You must sit there, sphinxlike, in your little bower, and await the coming of the right man, who *may* drop his handkerchief in front of you. If he *does*, that will be your cue to wigwag your willingness to surrender. And if 'the right man' fails to drop the handkerchief, and incidentally, by this trifling neglect, transforms your whole life into a barren, arid desert, it's yours to hide the ghastly fact, and keep right on looking pleasant for the rest of your starved, futile life. It's outrageous! I feel like insurging—becoming a wild-eyed revolutionist! Oh"—catching the shocked look in Jimmy's gray eyes—"not a Margio Sarko, willing to explode a bomb and die in the explosion; nor a Joan of Arc with an inspired cause to battle for; nor even

a Carrie Nation, with a call to hatchet the liquor element of the country. But—braver than a Margio Sarko or a Joan of Arc or a Carrie Nation—I am tempted to challenge every Mrs. Grundy from Frisco to Gotham, and deliberately snap my fingers in the face of that archaic, old, moth-eaten custom, and frankly say to the man I—I'd die for: 'I'm yours! *Please take me!*'"

"Don't do it!"

"Why?"

"I could advance fifty-seven valid reasons why you should not take the initiative in such a matter."

"But suppose, Jimmy, that he should *never*—er—lay his cards on the table!"

"Be a sport! Take the chance!" he said tensely. "If this Grand Panjandrum—this Dalai Lama of your affections—is a *man*, and—and cares for you at all, he won't need any hints. Anyhow, if you attempted to put your brand on him, he'd think you loosed or joking, and you'd queer the whole blamed shooting match. It—it seems incredible, to me, that you, of all women, shouldn't know what trail to take in such a contingency. You ought to be able to lead a chap on in a thousand ways, and elicit from him any information you want, from the brand of breakfast food he eats to the kind of She he prefers as his official coffee pourer for the rest of his days."

"I've exhausted my resources," admitted Billie demurely, "and failed ingloriously. This man seems absolutely invulnerable. I don't know what to do—unless—I—well, unless I just ask him in plain English. You see, Jimmy, if I don't do something, it may be that .

"This were the cost to me,
That he were lost to me!

Now don't you think I might give him the wee-est little hint? Suggestion sometimes works wonders, and—"

"Not on your life!" exploded Jimmy. "You're as mad as Bedlam to think of such a thing. That is the one thing a man can't stand—and keep his respect for a woman! Call it a foolish convention if you like; but it really is tradition, and it's been tradition for Heaven knows

how many centuries. And, you may take it from me, no man worthy the name would ever forgive the woman—the One Woman—for butting in and cheating him out of the God-given privilege of telling her—um—about it. Don't do it, girl!"

He got to his feet, and shuttled back and forth across the room several times; then he tried to mop the worry from his face with a handkerchief, and flumped into a chair.

"Are you *sure* there are no exceptional cases, Jimmy?" she asked, very wistfully and softly.

And Billie had the sweetest voice in the world. Her lips were tremulous, and the appeal in her eyes was heart-breaking. And she looked so small and childish that his whole big, warm heart—which was aching like an aching tooth—went out to her; the precious little culprit who had been caught in her own snare!

He reached out and patted the little hand that lay on the arm of her chair.

"Poor little girl!" he said very gently. "This thing—it means to you, then—"

"It means everything worth while in this world, Jimmy!"

The passionate tenderness in her low voice flicked him like the sting of a scorpion. He got to his feet and walked the floor with gray face and clenched hands. The girl's words had suddenly, ruthlessly ripped the silver lining out of his own hopes and plans, and transformed his recently discovered wealth and other achievements into Dead Sea fruit.

Always she had been the pivotal point of his existence. Everything in his world centered in and wrapped about her. His horizon was bounded by her on every side. Never, until that moment, had he realized how strong was the hope—through all of the years that had been so lonely and ghastly without her—that, sooner or later, the lure of the hills and plains, which she had so passionately loved, would draw her back to the old life, and to him. Now, however, her words made plain that he could have no place in her future life.

Through the blighting chaos that was



"I have wanted so to see you, Jimmy," she said casually.

in his mind, a resolution gradually crystallized and stood out clear and strong. He must help Billie out. At no matter what cost to himself, she must be a happy Billie—without sacrificing one iota of her sweet womanliness. And it was up to him to see that these conditions were enforced. Left fatherless and motherless, it devolved upon him to see to it that her life was not ruined; the irony of fate, though, wasn't it, he said to himself, that he must compel another man to woo and marry the girl for whom he, himself, would have waded through arctic snows or tropical jungles, through peril and pestilence, if only she had loved him?

Of course, it was this six-cylinder aristocrat, Fairfax! But how in Sam Hill *could* a woman like Billie love a creature like that? Well, wearily, since she *did* love him, he would compel that

human hookworm to scratch humble gravel clear down to China, if necessary. He would choke an avowal of love from him—for, of *course*, the creature loved her! No trousered thing that ever walked the face of the earth could help loving her. But what an unconscionable ass he must be to need prodding—when Billie loved him—Billie! Loved him in the "genuine, old-fashioned way," she had said.

He realized, with a fierce pang, what that meant. But that was Billie's way. She would lavish the whole wealth of her ardent, passionate, generous heart upon the One Man. She would wade through flood and cyclones for him, too, if necessary. Well, he told himself, he would force that human toadstool to make her happy, if he had to punch him to pulp in its accomplishment!

The young man found himself yearn-

ing for the opportunity to punch some one or something; yearning with an enthusiasm and intensity heated to incandescence in the forge of his blind, helpless, corked-up misery. He hungered, in particular, to punch this human being as he never had wanted to do anything in his life before—except to take this girl's little, sweet, wistful face in his hands and kiss it.

Billie sat very still, gazing into the fire. Never had she looked so appealing and altogether lovely as she did at that moment. There was no trace now of the gay, smiling mischief that usually lurked in her face. It had been succeeded by a sweet, new gravity that, somehow, seemed to ennoble her exquisite little features. Some subtle change had come to her; about her radiated an appealing softness and sweet womanliness that wrenched his heart with longing.

Jimmy gulped down a lump that made his throat ache as he looked at the wistful little figure.

"The damned coyote!" he gritted.

He set the muscles of his face hard, like a sprinter making the last desperate effort to finish on the remnant of his endurance.

"Billie," he said, in a voice that he could not keep steady, "has this About Ben Adhem of your tribe of lovers—this Fairfax, never said—"

Noting the unsteadiness of his voice, Billie suddenly looked up and caught the baffled, tortured expression in the man's eyes, and the lines of tense emotion—which he was trying so hard to suppress—about his sensitive-lipped, clean-shaven mouth. The sight was the fatal one prod too many to her leashed emotions. The dam of her self-control—never too rigid—gave way. Like a flash, she was on her feet, facing him, her eyes living blue flames, her cheeks an excited scarlet; her little figure drawn to its full height, and every tendril of her shining, red-gold hair seeming a quiver. She trembled with the magnificent rage of a wild rose tossed by a summer zephyr.

"Bother Fairfax! What right have

you, Jimmy Seward, to assume that I, the daughter of great, manly John Winthrop—I, who was born and reared among real, live, red-blooded men—am eating my heart out for a piffing, futile, little trousered creature, whose veins are filled with rose water? A blasé, lotus-eating sybarite, who means about as much in the Great Scheme of Life as a humming bird? A creature who spends a whole year of God-given time in the Orient selecting a measly little rug? And another year chasing after a trashy little scarab? And squandering enough money on that old, germ-ridden, filthy rug and that silly, creepy, green bug to keep a hundred of God's poor from starving or freezing during their whole lives?

"Fairfax! Huh! A creature who has about as much real soul and manhood as a prairie hen! Why, I took him up on Sunset Butte to see a sunset so gorgeous and sublime that I stood mute and awed before it—and thanked the Father for the splendid privilege! And he—he merely remarked that it reminded him of broiled lobsters—and made him hungry! He has been out here four weeks; and the monumental egotist thinks when he goes back East this whole, big West will shrivel into a howling wilderness—and the sun will quit setting this side the divide! Why, judged by the standard of our West, such men as he, measured by the cord, would not count one! Could I marry a man of that sort? *Could I?*"

At this sudden, typhoonic outbreak, the amazed young man simply stiffened into a stunned, staring, human gargoye. Gradually, however, he began to recognize something reminiscent and familiar in the situation; something homelike—and very, very Billielike. Many times he had seen her storm thus in the old days. He remembered that her father once had said: "Life with Billie will be a succession of splendid episodes!"

"Anyhow," continued the little fury, who had been compelled to stop for breath, "didn't Percy Fairfax follow me on his knees all the way to Egypt and back last year? And isn't he at the ranch now in the same attitude? You

owe me an apology, Jimmy Seward—and you will apologize here and now—this instant!”

The imperious command was emphasized by a vigorous stamp of a ridiculously small boot.

A fuse seemed to have blown out in the young man's verbal power house; no sound issued from his moving lips. He managed, however, to nod, which, combined with the chastened, meek expression in his eyes, the girl construed into humbly, obedient intent.

“You don't seem to have credited me with much in the way of character or common sense; but I would have you know, sir, that if ever I marry—which is very doubtful—I shall marry a *man*, not a *manikin*!” Another breath was imperative. “I also want you to know, sir, that I've deliberately—and finally—left behind me that lotus-eating, broiled-lobstering, monkey-dinnering, Three-weeking, flesh-potting society life. Henceforth, it's with the good, wholesome, honest things I shall have to do; the sunsets and sunrises, and the hills, and the woods, and the mountains, and real men and women, and horses, and cattle, and toil, too—the worth-while things of life; and I'll—I'll grow old among the boys—who I-I-like me.” She averted her face. “To think, Jimmy, that of all the people in the world—you who know me better than any one else has ever known me except—except daddy—”

Her voice faltered—and as suddenly as it had flamed, the tempest died. She put her hands over her face and collapsed into the big chair.

The petrified young man was galvanized into sudden life. In one stride he was at her side. Dropping beside her chair, he drew her hands from her face, keeping both of them in one of his. Heavy tears welled from under her long lashes and rolled down her cheeks. Her scarlet, flowerlike mouth was tremulous, and her breath came in stifled, silent sobs. He rarely had seen the valiant little creature cry; though frequently he had seen her chalk-faced and white-flipped from pain. He was shocked and infinitely compassionate. Very tenderly

he kissed the tips of her fingers within his own.

Billie withdrew her hands, and dabbed her wet eyes with a sodden little fluff of snowy linen and lace, gibing at herself for her “emotionality,” and for being such a weepy, silly baby!

He drew her head against his shoulder and stroked her hair soothingly, and told her she had the best right in the world to cry if she wanted to, and tried to comfort her, just as he had when she was two instead of twenty-two. And all the while, at the back of his mind, persisted one question. It zigzagged and shuttled in and out. Almost subconsciously he mulled it over and over. “If not Fairfax—who?”

When she had grown calmer, he said very softly:

“Billie, if it isn't Fairfax, who—who is the man?”

Promptly her head was transferred from his shoulder to the back of her chair, and her face averted. She remained silent.

“Look at me, Billie,” he said gently.

Still she looked away from him. He placed a hand under her soft, dimpled little chin, and turned her face toward him. Her long, curling lashes swept her cheeks, concealing her eyes.

“Billie, look at me!”

This time there was a masterful undertone in his rich voice. He took her lovely flushed face in both of his hands and turned it up to his. She tried to turn her eyes from him; but he compelled her gaze—and held it by sheer mastery.

“Billie,” he repeated, a sudden hot fervency throbbing in his voice, his face flushed, and his eagerly questioning eyes searching hers, “if not Fairfax, who—who—?”

With a little wet-eyed, mocking smile, she said tremulously:

“You sound like an owl I heard hoo-hooing out there in the woods to-night.”

But he held her eyes with his, and, looking deep down into their tantalizing, blue depths, he read his answer. Into his face stole the expression of a Sir Galahad grasping the Grail—or of a Shadrach coming out of the fiery furnace.

The MEDIÆVAL MALE

by
ELIZABETH NEWPORT
HEPBURN



ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

LAST October there appeared in SMITH'S MAGAZINE an article by Anne O'Hagan called "Why I Am a Suffragist," which gives me a new pride in being a woman. Personally I feel that the single drawback to this essay is the fact that it has not been reprinted in other magazines and newspapers all over the country. For Anne O'Hagan discusses the moot question sanely, logically, and with unfailing good temper, whereas a good many of us who are suffragists are sorely tempted to irritation or exaggeration or melancholy or irony or just plain rage when somebody puts to us this simple query.

Of course, Anne O'Hagan is delightfully right in her attitude. The way to count in this world for any change, any reform, any achievement out of the common is to work like Beelzebub himself, and keep your deep-rooted sense of humor. It isn't always easy or pleasant. But it pays good interest on your convictions and enthusiasms in the end. It even wins adherents in the courts of conservatism and stand-pat-ism which could be won in no other way.

All the foregoing leads up to a clipping in to-day's paper which I fancy might affect the tempers of a good many women, if it weren't for that comforting realization of the incongruous and absurd, which, thank God, women have not been denied, all antiquated slanders of male writers to the contrary not-

withstanding. The clipping is as follows:

RICHMOND, Va., Feb. 8th.—The house to-day defeated the bill providing for the amendment to the State constitution to allow equal suffrage to the women of the commonwealth. Mr. Love, of Lunenburg, in an address opposing the measure—which provided that the suffrage be granted to women only on measures affecting property they might own, and affecting schools—said he desired the lovely women of Virginia to remain in their present high realm, and not be brought down to mingle with negroes at the polls on Election Day.

Now, it may be well for me to state that I have no personal grudge against the gentleman here quoted, of whom I have never heard before, and no ax to grind, since I own no property in Virginia, and have no youngsters attending Virginia schools. And yet my most charming and picturesque grandmother was a Virginian, and some of her lovely personal belongings are still held in high honor, and gazed at by her descendants at rare intervals, almost as one might look at the sword of a hero or the breviary of a saint. To me the Commonwealth of Virginia stands, I may add, for high things, for virility, moral enthusiasm, liberty, courage, and beyond all things for the will and the power to reconstruct and remodel after disaster and destruction and so to count in the most practical way for human progress.

But this Mr. Love, of Lunenburg—somehow his own name and that of his town seem peculiarly appropriate!—

stands for a type of man which is of all types most interesting and amazing, the type of medieval male, roaming at large in a modern civilization.

As a rule, a man of this peculiar constitution uses flowery language, which recalls the generation of Clarissa Harlowe and Tom Jones. Such a man speaks frequently of lovely woman and the chivalry of the old South—or the old régime. He compliments all women to their faces with a directness, a suavity, a beautiful indifference to facts which cannot but win their respect for his delightful faith in woman's ability to swallow any sugar-coated pill which man, her lord and master, may proffer.

This medieval male, wherever found, is the most vigorous opponent to the ideal of equal suffrage living in our world to-day. You may find him, the type which he represents, in Maine as well as in Virginia and South Carolina; in New York and New Orleans, in Boston and Baltimore; in France, Spain, England, and Germany—albeit slightly modified or disguised—and doubtless in Teheran, Timbuktou, and Kalamazoo. He is dangerous to the suffrage cause because he is frequently so clever, so ingratiating, so good to look at, with his little chivalric airs and graces, his hand-on-heart adoration of lovely woman, and he pulls the wool over her eyes with a courtly effect of tenderly adjusting her new hat from Virot. This attention she accepts with a truly lamblike appreciation and humility, until that horrid demon, Education, inoculates her with the deadly germ of modernism. Then

she makes her voice heard, demanding a dozen privileges which he is so sure are bad for her. Then she talks about taxation without representation, and citizenship, and *real* education for girls, instead of the old frilly make-believe, and finally she wants to legislate for her own kind, all those other dear creatures with the warm wool pulled over their eyes to keep out the drafts.

In our own South the medieval male



My most charming and picturesque grandmother was a Virginian.

uses as an argument against suffrage the boggy of lovely woman being jostled by the unsavory negro when she goes to the polls. As though there were any place where a woman would—and should—be so safe from the negro as at the polls, protected by all the men of her own race. And as if any one needed more the protection of adequate legislation than the women of the South; not because of the negro primarily, but because of the antiquated prejudices and ignorances of many of her own men.

In Boston the medieval male objects to votes for women because women never have voted—an ancient but somewhat lame and seedy argument—and also because women have already everything they can possibly need, which last statement is not true; but then nowhere is the medieval male burdened by a sense of obligation to mere facts. If he were he would immediately rank with our big-brained modern men, and this article would never get into print.

Among the Latins the medieval male is an ever-present reality, and his gestures, his genuflections, his voice cadences at the mere mention of lovely woman—when she is present—are truly impressive. She is too noble, too fragile, too pure, too frail, too high, or too low for the mundane, mysteriously degrading act of casting a ballot. If she be married her possession of ballot rights will tend to make strife between husband and wife, "and she will vote as her husband does, anyway, so what's the use?" This last is an argument familiar to women in every nation under the sun, where exists the medieval male. Possibly I should translate it more elegantly, but that is the gist of it.

In Germany my hero has just one argument with an illustrious parent; a woman's duty in life is summed up in the illuminating phrase—*Küche, Kirche, und Kinder*, and this is the same verbal bomb flung by the men of the lower East Side when a suffragist appears. A woman I know, an ardent suffragist, clever, well-to-do, progressive, was taunted by a person half drunk, wholly profane: "Go home and wash your dinner dishes, you—" Whereupon my friend, who employs many domestics, answered sweetly: "My good man, it is now five o'clock, and I always get through my dishes by three."

But the medieval male does not care when a woman "gets through her dishes," or whether she has any, or whether she possess husband, home, or children. He ignores the situation as it is, and harks back perpetually to his own era; if a woman isn't married she ought to be married; if she hasn't children she should have them; if she has

not a home, and a factory, and a school, and a workshop, all in one, as she once had, then the world is going to the dogs, and the only way to help matters is to pretend that nothing has changed.

Yet the world does move, industry has developed along new lines, new inventions alter old conditions, kindergartens, and grade schools, and high schools, and colleges flourish upon the earth, specialization everywhere increases, many "home duties" of yesterday are more cheaply performed by machines in factories to-day, and, above all, *many men in our era cannot support the women of their own families*; and some of those who could, do not. Yet still the medieval male babbles happily on about protecting lovely woman, the high mission of chivalry, the whereabouts of woman's place, and still he refers reverently to that dear old myth concerning the sturdy oak and the clinging vine.

One of the most interesting facts about the medieval male is that he is not always recognizable on sight. Sometimes he appears to be modern, progressive, intelligent, until the subject of woman is introduced, and presto, change! He seems to be clinking old armor, cavorting along upon a lame but gallant hobby-horse draped in gay trappings; in your mind's eye you behold his lovelocks, his picturesque garments. The splendid thing about him is that sometimes—not often—he actually lives up to his time-worn code, and supports numbers of women in superlative or comparative idleness, while he slaves at his work and pays the bills without question. But these cases are rare; possibly if the clinging-vine ideal were registered in the laws of any given State so that a man were legally forced to support all his female relatives not possessed of husbands, there would be, in that commonwealth, a universal demand for equal suffrage from men, on the theory that it might eventually tend to lighten the burden of the overworked male citizen.

Usually the medieval male is not this special style of martyr. He may support his wife with a fair degree of philosophy—he is very apt to give her



As though there were any place where a woman would—and should—be so safe as at the polls, protected by all the men of her own race!

presents and balk at a personal allowance—but he is inclined to marry off his daughters with due speed; or to allow them the high privilege of earning their daily bread in quite a tolerant and philosophical spirit. For, after all, it is easier to orate about chivalry, and woman's sphere, and the higher plane of "the ladies, God bless 'em," than to support indefinitely four or five able-bodied daughters with normal appetites, or a quota of old maid aunts or cousins, or even one mother, one wife, and one daughter—on the whole a moderate supply of female dependents. In Europe the dot system still demands something from a father after a girl's marriage, but in America even the sturdiest type of parent usually shifts with cheerful

alacrity the burden of supporting lovely woman to some young man, whether papa be medieval or modern. As a matter of fact, the maiden thus shifted is rarely a dead weight, save in the most sublimated social circles; for, sooner or later, whether our women marry or remain single, whether they have five children or none, they make at least some effort, however puny, to pay their way.

It is this effort, whether wholly successful or comparatively futile, which justifies the ideal of votes for women. Were women purely parasitic, the logical right to representation would seem shadowy enough, and for the most part it is those men who believe in the parasitism of women and the female parasites themselves who are loudest in op-



Your daughter, Mr. Medieval Male, has just come home on a crowded subway train.

position to suffrage. Certainly there are notable exceptions, "antis" doing an important share of the world's work, men who support the ideal of education, and even professional work for woman, yet not her presence at the polls. These are the illogical folk who really belong to neither camp, for if women are to be trained for the work of the world why should they be denied direct influence upon government? Obviously the folk who oppose woman's suffrage to-day are the logical descendants of those who violently opposed college education for women thirty years ago, and of those others, earlier still, who thought it madness to suggest that girl children should go to school along with boys.

Could our opponents restore old conditions, when public schools did not ex-

ist, or existed only for boys, when girls and women never worked in shops and factories, when woman was content to rule over home because in the home she baked and brewed, spun and wove, trained children and servants, if, I say, these old conditions could be restored, then there would be some logic, if not a poetical justice, in the plea that women do not need the vote. Yet how is the most impassioned anti or the most medieval male to manage this miracle? As soon turn back the clock of progress, and begin with the neolithic age! Being a woman and a suffragist, I wouldn't turn the clock back for any bribe, not for all the chivalric devotion, all the pageantry and poetry, all the blare of trumpets which pertained to the age of chivalry itself.

Possibly Elaine, Tennyson's "lily maid of Astolat," is, to the medieval male, the ideal of all the myth and poetry of the past. Certainly she is a picturesque person, as interpreted by Tennyson; it won't do to refer to Mallory in this connection. But I have often thought what a good time Elaine might have had if she had belonged to our generation. Instead of looking out of her tower window after Lancelot's departure for the wars, and weeping over her lord's shield, and sadly picturing the charms of her rival, the too complaisant Guinevere, she would have gone to college, and played basket ball, and drowned her sorrows in a good stiff math examination. She would have lost that forlorn, drooping, lily effect, and become a wholesome, rosy-cheeked young person, and life would have been so exciting and stimulating that by the first of her sophomore year she would have forgotten all about Lancelot. Instead of drifting down to Camelot, "steered by the dumb," wonderfully picturesque but most distressingly dead, she would eventually have marched down the church aisle to the strains of Lohengrin—in all human probability. Possibly the bridegroom might have been, not a world-worn Lancelot, but Galahad himself, a virile, humorous, happy Galahad, with no monkish notion about the search for the Grail being incompatible with an enchanting wife, a happy married life, and "votes for women" engraved on all the wedding silver.

What splendid arguments for suffrage the two of them would have evolved—colored by all the charm of those chivalric days, and yet with a wholly modern perspective!

After all, would Elaine, up to date, be less attractive, even to the medieval male? I hear so much from that omnipresent gentleman about modernity spoiling a woman's charm—the "rare bouquet of personality." He even fears college, still more the dire effect of a "steady job"—not that he would use such a vulgar phrase!—and of course at the polls, she, woman, must instantly be shorn of every atom of her womanly appeal, her subtle sex attraction.

But why? That is what I want to know! Why should exercising this privilege divorce a woman from her softer voice, her daintier garments, her distinctive femininity? She will, it is true, be thrown more with men; she will not merely cast a vote, but she will serve on commissions and committees; she will occasionally run for office, particularly as she grows older; she will know something about politics generally, and do something about social and moral conditions. But if there is any give-and-take, any natural influence of men and women upon each other, will not this closer bond between the world's workers tend to a better mutual understanding? The militant anti and the medieval male talk about woman's "higher plane," but we everyday women know better. We know that we are neither better nor worse than men; we are merely different in some things, because of nature and because of training, and this despite our common humanness. We need to learn of men, and we need to teach men some of those things which we know best.

Men are breadwinners and fathers; women are homemakers and mothers. Already women are becoming breadwinners—men have taught them how. And women housekeepers wish to try their hand at some of the civic and governmental housekeeping, if for no better reason than that, like a certain strenuous figure in a famous advertisement, we, too, are born "chasers of dirt."

"Ah," says the medieval male at this point, in his saddest, suavest accents, "that is the whole trouble, the dirt, the dreadful grime, the immorality, the rottenness of the world from which we try to shield you, oh, lovely woman."

When he speaks like this no woman on earth can wholly withstand the medieval male. He is so solemn, so sincerely convinced that women who bear men's children are but delicate blossoms at best, blossoms which must wither the instant they are transplanted along the common highways of life.

But again why? If the woman who cleans her own house does not inevitably die of tuberculosis because she sweeps

up the dust, why should the women who go into the larger houses, the wider streets of municipal life, contract the evil habits, the squalid thoughts, the unclean imaginings of those beings who are the moral dirt of any community? Does going to the polls to cast the ballot rob an honest man of his honesty, a clean man of his morality, a strong man of his virility?

Has the knowledge of good and evil, which a college curriculum, the study of science, of biology, brought to women in our day—to a large number of them, anyhow—tainted their minds, and smirched their ideals, and stolen their sweetness? Are all the college girls you know, Mr. Medieval Male, vulgarized, robbed of their virginal charm? And if education, learning the facts about life, do not destroy virtue, why should contact with men, the bad as well as the good, and with other women, all grades of women, immediately lower the tone of women's minds and the plane of their conduct?

That young, vigorous, clear-eyed girl, your daughter, Mr. Medieval Male, has just come home on a crowded subway train. In front of her were rough workmen, two of them negroes; sitting beside her was one of the fastest young plutocrats in Manhattan, brushing her sleeve was a painted lady, while all about her were the rank and file of her countrymen, what we in our prouder moments call "the common people." Do you feel that she has been defiled by contact with these men and women, that

she is no longer your clean-hearted, radiant girl because of that subway ride? "Absurd," you say. But why absurd, when you are so sure that voting at the polls, once a year, will in some mysterious manner "bring her down from her high realm."

But you detest the subway, all the jostling and crowding of modern cities; you are not defending anything so indefensible. Well and good, but that does not answer my question. Has your daughter been in any way contaminated by that subway ride, or has she not? And if she is still healthy, and lovable, and good—and using the subway every day, or its crowded counterpart in some other city—how on earth is the mere act of casting her ballot, among other men and women, come together for the same purpose, going to blight her in that mysterious fashion you so fear?

Please, Mr. Medieval Male, wherever you live, and Mr. Love, of Lunenburg, also, wake up! Come into the warm sunlight of the twentieth century, forget your shadowy past, look at lovely woman, and see how much lovelier—and healthier—she is to-day than she has ever been before in the history of the race. Help us to convert the antis, and to convince those still perched on the rickety fence. We need you, we need your potential, eighteen-carat, modernized chivalry, the antis need your example, and the commonwealth, the common welfare over the wide world, needs us all!





THE MYSTERY OF THE SECRET ROOM

BY
EDITH
SUMMERS
V. P. DEGRAFF

Author of "Adventures in Bohemia," "The He Co-Ed," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

MYSTERIOUS and romantic adventures don't often happen to girls in school, worse luck! They have to get all that out of books. But last fall term Theodosia and I had an adventure that was a corker.

It all happened on account of our taking that room up in the upper main corridor. Ever since I first went to St. Agatha's I'd been crazy to have a room up there. You see, the middle part of St. Agatha's is an awfully old-fashioned and romantic place. It used to be a family mansion, long, long ago; and it's built after the style of an English castle. On the first and second stories the rooms are great big solemn things, with wainscoted walls, and immense high ceilings, and doors so big and heavy that it hurts your wrist to pull them open. They are used mostly for reception and guest rooms now, and they seem awfully chilly and dismal. But I suppose in those old days they were gay and lively enough.

The third story, what we call the upper main corridor, must have been in-

tended for servants' rooms. There are lots of them, mostly very small, with little dormer windows and queer nooks and corners. And the whole place is such a maze of blind alleys, and narrow, winding corridors, and dark niches, and up one step and down two more, that when I was a freshie I used to get lost regularly every music-practice hour. For, you see, these had been made into piano-practice places. There's a piano, generally a pretty old and rickety and out-of-tune one, in each one of these little rooms; and that's where all the girls practice in daytime.

But after dark they never poke their noses into the place, except maybe on Hallowe'en, a lot of them together, for there's an old story that it's haunted, and that the walls are full of secret passages, and that there's a secret room somewhere that has some terrible mystery about it. Some say a man was murdered there, and some say he starved to death. Of course, you know that all the old English castles have secret passages and secret rooms, where

people can hide in time of war or other troubles like that.

Well, the school was so crowded at the beginning of last fall term that Doctor Higgs—she's our principal; Higginbotham is her name, but we never bother to say it all—said that somebody would have to use one of the rooms up in the upper main corridor, and who would volunteer. And Theodosia and I volunteered.

Theodosia is my cousin; that's how I happened to be rooming with her. I had to nearly choke her into volunteering, because she'd got all settled down where she was and hated to move, and the mysterious and romantic don't appeal to her. But I had to make her volunteer, for, goodness knows, I wouldn't have slept alone in that place for a million dollars. Theodosia is a good deal like her name; she's large, and ponderous, and hard to handle, both bodily and mentally. She sleeps so sound that she doesn't hear the third rising gong, though it's loud enough to wake a dead dormouse; and she's got a conscience like the butter we get on a cold January morning, it's so hard and uncompromising. It *will* melt, though—like the butter—if you give it a proper chance.

Among the little poky rooms up there, there are quite a few good-sized ones, and Doctor Higgs gave us our choice, because we'd volunteered. We went up and looked them over, and decided upon one that had a big, stone fireplace in it, with a real, old-fashioned chimney shelf, and wainscoting all around, and two cunning dormer windows looking out over the river. I tell you, it was a peach. They gave us a nice new rug and some quite decent furniture, and we moved up our sofa pillows, and photographs, and school banners, and things, and made it into just the coziest little den you ever saw.

I didn't feel a bit afraid of ghosts, and neither did Theodosia.

The first night we slept in the room, I was just beginning to get drowsy, when suddenly I came broad awake. I had heard a *step* over my head.

I was so paralyzed with fear that the first time I opened my mouth I couldn't

make a sound. But, after a second or two, I managed to chortle out, "Th-th-theo," in the scarest kind of a stuttering whisper, "d-d-d-did you hear that noise?"

Theo turned over and grunted a little.

"Rats!" she mumbled, meaning it both ways, I suppose.

I *knew* it wasn't rats. I know the sound a rat makes—there are millions of them in St. Agatha's—but this wasn't it. It was a *human* footstep; and it was right over our heads, where no *living* human being could possibly be. I lay quite still, listening, and in a few moments I heard it again, several times, and quite distinct, like a person walking about. I tell you I was scared. It was a moonless night, as black as pitch.

I slipped out of my bed, and over to Theo's, and crawled in by her.

"Theo, Theo," I gurgled, poking her in the ribs, where I know she's tender, "you've got to wake up! There's somebody—something walking around right over this room!"

"Ugh!" grunted Theo. "Stop poking me, and I'll do anything. I was just dreaming about a lovely hamper from home—cold roast chicken and plum pudding and——"

"Listen!"

Thump—thump—thump! Three distinct footsteps sounded in the same place, right above our ceiling, and then there was a queer, creaky noise, like a very stiff door opening and closing. And then silence—like the grave.

Theo was wide awake by now, and listening, too.

"It must have been the wind," she said.

But I knew from the way her voice wiggled that even she was frightened.

We lay there, grabbing tight hold of each other for what seemed like ages. Everything was suddenly so still that you could hear the blood beating, marching time in your head—left, right—left, right—left, right—enough to set you crazy. There wasn't a breath of wind outside, so it couldn't have been that.

"It *must* have been rats," whispered

Theo at last. "Besides, if we haven't done anything wrong——"

She didn't get time to finish. For, all at once, there came a sound—tap—tap—tap—and then like hands fumbling about—pawing around in a blind sort of way, as though they were trying to find a latch. And where do you suppose it was? Right on the other side of our own wall, *behind the clothes press!*

Theo tried to yell out "Who's there?" but didn't manage to get out anything but a dry gulp. I grabbed tighter hold of her, and I remember trying to swallow, but couldn't, my mouth was so dry. A creepy, prickly feeling came out all over me, especially in my hair; and I know now what people mean when they talk about a person's being scared stiff.

After what seemed like ages more of black silence, we heard the old sound over our heads again, thump—thump—thump, like some one walking—a man, I should say—and then more black silence.

I don't know how long we lay there waiting for it to get light, and afraid to move hand or foot. But we must have fallen asleep about dawn, I guess, for the next thing I knew it was bright daylight, and the second rising gong was making a din like Gabriel's trumpet, and Theo was sound asleep, as usual.

With the morning sunshine streaming in through the dormer windows, and everything looking so bright and comfy, and all our things just where we'd left them, it seemed as though those ghost noises must have been only a dream. But they weren't; because, when Theo woke up, or, rather, when I waked her—a good way is to tickle the soles of her feet—she remembered hearing them, too. However, nobody bothers much about ghosts in the morning, especially when it's bright and sunny. We had to hurry with our dressing to get down in time for breakfast. If you're not in for prayers you don't get any—breakfast, I mean, of course, not prayers. And then there was church—it was Sunday—and then dinner. We

have roast chicken on Sunday, and everybody looks forward to it all week. And then, after dinner, there was Christian Endeavor meeting. So we didn't have much time to talk about the ghost. But after Christian Endeavor we had to retire to our rooms for meditation.

On Sunday afternoons, from three to five, everybody has to stay in her room and meditate on her sins. It's pretty safe to say that nobody meditates, not even Theo. Some sleep, some make fudge or Christmas presents, some read novels, and some sit around, and gossip, and tell stories. When the teacher in charge of your hall knocks on your door, you hide what you're doing, and pretend to be meditating.

"Now," said I to Theo, as soon as we got up into our room after Christian Endeavor, "let's make an investigation."

"An investigation!" echoed Theo.

"Sure," I returned, "for the ghost."

The words were no sooner out of my head than there came a tap at the door, and Theo called "Come in," and it was Doctor Higgs.

Doctor Higgs is very thin, and tall, and dignified, and she has long, white teeth, like tombstones, and very little hair. She scares the girls, and makes them think they've been doing something wrong just by looking at them. I call her the Bloodless One; but Theo says it isn't respectful. It had leaked out a while before that her son had recently run away from college, and gone on the stage or something, and embittered her life; and, goodness knows, she seemed to get more like wormwood every day. It was queer to me to think that anybody's mother could be like that, and I didn't blame her son a bit. Besides, I think it would be lovely to be on the stage.

"As there is no teacher in charge of you here," said Doctor Higgs, "I shall trust to your honor to obey the Sunday afternoon rules. You know what they are—quiet and meditation."

She took a good, sharp look around, and sailed out again.

"Now," I said to Theo, as soon as the



Thump—thump—thump! Three distinct footsteps sounded in the same place. And then silence—like the grave.

door was closed behind her, "let's begin!"

"But, Betty," objected Theo, "she trusted to our honor."

"Oh, pshaw!" I returned impatiently. "They always do. You know right well it doesn't mean anything. Come on!"

"No," said Theo, planking herself down in the rocking-chair, "I'm on my honor."

Theodosia has such a literal mind!

"All right!" I snapped. "Stay on it! I'll investigate myself."

So I started in.

The sounds had come from the ceiling and the wall back of the clothes press. There couldn't be anything above the ceiling, I thought, except maybe some sort of an attic; and there

was no way of getting to it that I knew of. So first I investigated the wall.

I went into the next room, and examined it, but there was nothing on the other side of our clothes press but an ordinary whitewashed wall.

The wall seemed awfully thick, though; so I decided to go back and move the clothes press.

The press weighed at least seven tons. I couldn't begin to budge it myself, but I knew that if I puffed and blew long enough, Theo would forget about her honor and come and help me. So I puffed and blew as hard as I could, and pretty soon she got up and came over and laid her hand to the plow like a good pal. After a lot more puffing, and blowing, and pulling, and scraping,

and nearly turning the whole thing over on ourselves, we at last managed to edge it out a couple of feet from the wall.

There was nothing behind it except a lot of dust and cobwebs, and an old rusty buttonhook.

But I'd heard about there being things behind panels, and I began to rap each panel with my knuckles.

"Gee!" I exclaimed suddenly, for I'd hit one that sounded hollow. "Try on here, Theo!" I gasped.

Theo knocked, and began to get interested. The excitement had got her off her honor, as I knew it would.

"Perhaps," she said, looking at me with big, solemn eyes, "we've found the secret passage!"

I pushed on the panel, and then Theo pushed, and then we both pushed together. And the third time it gave a little creak.

"It's *something*!" I whispered excitedly. "But what ninnies we are! Of course it doesn't turn on hinges! It slides; they always slide."

We broke two nail files and a pair of manicure scissors trying to make it slide; and then I sneaked down to the dining room, and got away with two dinner knives without any one's seeing me. After a lot of trials, we managed at last to get the blades of the knives inserted into the crack of the panel, and then we pulled backward on the handles with all our might; and, mind you, that panel slid about half an inch. Though one of the knives broke off in the middle of the blade, and flew up, and came near blinding Theo for life! Gee, but it was exciting! But Theo took time to remind me that we'd have to confess about the dinner knife, and replace it.

Then we got our fingers into the crack, and pulled as hard as we could; and the first thing we knew that panel had slid back as far as it would go, and left a big, black, cobwebby hole, about two by four feet.

I lighted a candle and crawled inside, and found that the place was high enough to stand in, and that it seemed to go on forever.

"It's the passage, Theo," I chortled.

"Come on and let's see where it goes. Bring some matches."

"But, Betty, ought we to?"

Theodosia is a trial at times.

"Of course we ought to," I answered, doing my best to humor her. "It's our duty to find out the cause of that noise—it's our duty to the school, Theo."

Theo must have concluded that it was her duty, for I could hear her crawling in behind me, so I started ahead.

It was fortunate that we had taken off our best dresses and put on kimonos, for the passage was only just high and wide enough for a person to walk in—a tight fit for Theo, who's as big as a camel—and all sorts of nameless, clingy dust, and dirt, and cobwebs brushed off and fell down on us at every step. I had the worst of it, too, for I was ahead.

Presently we came to a flight of three or four steps, and I almost fell down them headfirst, for the candle didn't throw much light on the floor. Then we went up some steps, and then down three more, and then up a lot more; and it kept getting dustier and cobwebbier all the time. I began to get an awful, suffocated sort of feeling, for it seemed as if that passage would never come to an end. I was positive that I'd been walking for miles and miles.

Suddenly I heard Theo's voice behind me:

"Let's go back, Betty; I'm choking to death."

"So am I!" I gasped back. "But we must be nearer the other end. Let's go on."

"Maybe there isn't any other end," mourned Theo.

And just then the candle blew out.

I don't believe many people know what darkness really means. I didn't till then. I felt a great deal like a person must feel when he's been accidentally buried alive. I guess Theo did, too.

"Theo," I whispered, for it seemed somehow that if I spoke aloud something awful might happen, "Theo, let's have a match."

I could hear Theo fumble around for

a second, and then give the most horrified sort of gasp.

"What's the matter?" I called anxiously.

"They're gone!" she managed to blurt out. "I had them in the pocket of my kimono. Oh, Betty, I *knew* we oughtn't to have come!"

The idea of going back that immense long distance in the pitch blackness, with all that clingy dirt sticking itself to me at every step, was too much for me.

"Come on, Theo," I called encouragingly. "I can see light!"

Sure enough, it got larger and brighter; and as I came close I saw that it was an opening about the same size as the sliding panel in our room.

We crept through this opening, and found ourselves in a poky little dim room, with one very tiny window in it.

"It's the secret room!" whispered Theo in terror. "Let's go back."

"All right," I whispered back, for I



"I am a poor Russian refugee," replied the ghost.

And when I thought about the knockings and fumbings we'd heard the night before, my heart went cold inside of me. The least evil seemed to be to go ahead; and I guess Theo came to the same conclusion, for she didn't make any fuss about coming on. I groped along, hanging onto my useless candle, and feeling with my feet for steps; and after I'd gone what seemed like about seven more miles, I began to make out a sort of gray square in the blackness.

was seized with a sudden, gruesome, panicky feeling that anywhere, the black passage or anything, would be a better place to be in than that little room.

And then something terrible happened.

I had noticed that there was a dark-gray something or other, like a heap of old clothes or a lot of bran sacks, lying in one corner of the room. Just as we turned toward the opening to crawl

through again, this heap moved and stood up. And it was a man!

Neither of us shrieked or fainted, or did anything like that. We were too scared. We stood right there, and didn't breathe.

And while we stood there, rooted to the spot, as the storybooks say, that ghost began to speak.

"I thought my pursuers had stolen upon me at last," he said, in a voice a good deal like the hero in a play. "But I see that it is only two innocent maids. How came you here?"

Theo was the first to get back her wind. She's mighty brave in an emergency, Theodosia is.

"Who are you?" she asked, quite defiantly.

"I am a poor Russian refugee," replied the ghost. "I fled to this country for freedom. But I find that even here the secret emissaries of the bloody czar are on the watch for me. I have recently had a hairbreadth escape from their clutches; and I took refuge in this secret place, hoping to stay in hiding until they give up the search. I trust that you, who no doubt are tender-hearted, will not betray me."

"Maybe he's real!" I whispered to Theo. "There *are* Russian refugees."

"I'm going to touch him," said Theo.

And she actually went over and took hold of his hand. There are times when Theodosia is a marvel.

"He isn't a ghost," she said, turning back to me. "His hand's warm and solid, just like anybody's."

"What did you do to get yourself persecuted?" she asked him.

And then the ghost, I mean the refugee, told us all about how he had thrown a bomb, and the bomb had killed a whole lot of the rich, ruling people. And then he'd got away, and they'd been hunting him ever since.

"My hand was blown off," he concluded, "leaving me only this blackened stump."

And he held out a perfectly good, though rather dirty, hand. That was our first intimation that his terrible misfortunes had affected his mind. He didn't look insane, though. And I no-

ticed for the first time that, in spite of his haggard expression, he was remarkably handsome—dark, of course, you know—and a perfectly stunning profile.

"How did you get here?" asked the practical Theodosia.

And then he explained to us how a branch of the secret passage led down to the outside, and how he had got in that way, and how he stole out every evening to try to find food, but generally couldn't, and how last night he'd accidentally come down the passage that led to our room, but couldn't move the panel.

At this point, Theodosia, who had happened to glance out of the tiny window, suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, Betty, there's exactly the same view from this window that there is from ours. Our room must be right below here!"

And so it turned out it was. And that everlasting secret passage must have meandered over the whole house, and come right back almost to where it started. And of course that explained the steps overhead, and the fumbling behind the clothes press.

I felt terribly sorry for the poor Russian refugee. He looked awfully pale and thin—and *so* handsome. And I decided I'd do everything I possibly could to help him.

"You mustn't worry any more," I said comfortingly. "You're among friends, and we'll take care of you. We'll bring you up some things to eat right away, and some blankets and a pillow."

The poor Russian refugee was so grateful that tears came into his lovely dark eyes. He lifted up my hand and kissed it, just like they do in stories; and I tell you it sent a thrill right down to my toes.

"And now," I said, "we'll go back and get the things. If only I had a light for this candle!"

What does the refugee do but fish a fancy silver match box out of his pocket, and light the candle for me, and put a dozen matches into my hand.

"There," he said, "that's in case it blows out. And God bless you!"

We hurried back through the passage, which didn't seem nearly so long this time; and as soon as we were in our room again, Theodosia began.

"Betty," she said, sitting down on the edge of the bed, as though she expected to stay there forever, and looking at me with big eyes like a cow, "is it *right* to protect the Russian refugee?"

She was an awful sight; her hair full of dirt and cobwebs, and her face all smudges, and her kimono so dirtied up you could hardly make out the pattern. I glanced into the mirror, and saw that I was the same—only worse. We looked like two wild creatures.

"Is it *right*?" repeated that exasperating Theodosia.

"Right?" I echoed. "How can it be anything but right? Look at the fix he's in!"

"Yes," said Theo slowly. "But look at the fix he put other people-in. He murdered, Betty, murdered a whole lot of those people!"

"But he was oppressed," I returned. "Those men the bomb killed were terrible oppressors. The people have to revolt to get their rights."

"But the Bible says to turn the other cheek," mused Theodosia.

"I don't care if it does," I retorted impatiently. "People don't do it—they can't. They have to stand up for their rights, or they'd get walked all over."

"But it's so hard to know what's right," mourned Theodosia, her smudgy chin on her two grimy hands. "Maybe he ought to be given up to justice."

"Theodosia," I exclaimed indignantly, "I should think you'd be ashamed! The idea of giving up that poor, helpless man to be murdered! And he with such confidence in us! And this a free country, too! Why, I'm astonished at you!"

"I don't *want* to give him up," protested Theodosia. "I'd love to help him. But I want to do what's right. It's awfully hard, sometimes, to know what's right to do. Anyway," she added, with a sudden inspiration, "we ought to go straight and tell Doctor Higginbotham all about it."

"The dickens we ought!" I snapped, completely out of patience.

I saw that it was wasting time to argue with her; so I flounced out of the room, grabbing the key as I went, and locking the door behind me so she couldn't get out to tell.

I sneaked around by the back stairs to the pantry, and managed to get half a roast chicken, and a loaf of bread, and part of a pot of jam. And then I tried to get blankets and a pillow from the storeroom, but it was locked.

I got back without any one's seeing me, and found Theo still sitting on the bed with her chin on her hands. She wasn't angry at being locked in. She never does get angry. That's one of the provoking things about her.

"Betty," she said solemnly, "we oughtn't to steal food from the pantry."

"Theo," I returned, "if you don't shut up about what we ought and oughtn't to do you'll drive me insane. There's that poor man starving up there, and he's got to have food, no matter where it comes from. Now, you bring the blankets from my bed and come on!"

I grabbed up my pillow, and the dinner knife—the one we hadn't broken—and the candle, and started along. And Theo came behind with the blankets.

"Anyway," she called to me, as she panted along behind, "I'm going to tell Doctor Higginbotham the very first chance I get, and you shan't stop me."

When we got to the secret room, we found the refugee pacing up and down with a sort of wild look in his eyes. I felt a little scared at first, but I soon discovered the reason for the wild look.

He was hungry. The way he made that half chicken and that bread and jam disappear was simply a miracle.

Theo and I had spread out the blankets in a corner, and were just about to say good night to the refugee, and promise to come back with more food in the morning, when suddenly he gave a start, and a jump, and a half-suppressed sort of yell, and went as white as a sheet.

"My pursuers!" he gasped.

We listened. And sure enough, away down below we could hear the sound



He made some passes in the air in front of the refugee, and said something that I didn't quite make out.

of strange men's voices. I stuck my head out of the tiny window, and down in the garden below, close by the house, there was a little dark group of three or four men talking together in low tones, as though they were plotting something.

"They've discovered the passage! They're close by it!" whispered the refugee hoarsely. "I am lost!"

"No, you're not!" chipped in Theo quickly. "You come down to our room. We'll keep you there. We'll put the clothes press back against the panel, and they'll never suspect us."

All her scruples had vanished, you see, when it came to the scratch. Theo's all right when you don't give her time to think.

"Come on!" I whispered excitedly, grabbing up the blankets and pillow. "They're coming!"

I went first, with the things; and then the refugee; and Theo brought up the rear. Theo tried to close the panel behind us, but couldn't, it was so stiff.

We got the refugee safely down into our room, and then we all three tried to

close that panel. But it wouldn't budge an inch.

"It doesn't really matter," said Theo. "We'll put the clothes press against it, and that'll shut out all the light."

So we moved the clothes press back, with the help of the refugee, who seemed quite strong, in spite of his privations. And then we all sat down to get our breath.

We hadn't been quiet for more than two minutes, when suddenly we heard steps.

"My pursuers!" gasped the refugee, starting up.

"Be quiet!" whispered Theo. "They'll come to the end, and find it's blocked, and go back. All we have to do is to be quite still."

So we sat there like mice in a hole, hardly daring to breathe, and the steps came nearer and nearer, and presently we could hear voices, too. Then there was a fumbling of hands behind the clothes press.

The poor refugee trembled. Theo took one of his hands, and pressed it, to encourage him.

Suddenly there came an awful bang at the clothes press. We all started to our feet.

Another bang—and another. And then that big press just toppled right over, and fell face down kersmash in the middle of the room.

"Come quick—quick!" I yelled, grabbing the refugee's hand.

And I made for the door. I didn't know exactly what I was going to do; but my one idea was to run and get him hidden somewhere.

I tore open the door, and the whole three of us—Theo, the refugee, and myself—all rushed plump into the tall, majestic figure of Doctor Higginbotham.

The recoil threw the whole bunch of us back into the room; and there, coming out from behind the overturned press, were three men.

Theo and I planted ourselves in front of the refugee, determined to defend him to the last gasp. And Theo even banged the nearest man over the head with my parasol, which happened to be within her reach. But he didn't seem to mind.

Suddenly I heard a sort of gulp behind me, and, looking around, what do you suppose I saw but Doctor Higgs falling all over the neck of the refugee, and sniffing, and blubbering, and calling him her dear son!

Then one of the three men stepped up—a tall, dark man, with big eyes and longish hair, and a lot of black whiskers—and made some passes in the air in front of the refugee, and said something that I didn't quite make out. And all at once the expression on the refugee's face changed like a flash. I saw now that he was very young, quite a boy, in fact. His drawn, haggard, panicky look had all gone; and instead, he was half laughing, and looking sort of silly, and sheepish, and bewildered. But, with it all, he *was* handsome.

"Why, hello, mater!" he cried, putting his two hands on Doctor Higgs' shoulders. "How the dickens did I get here?"

And then the man who had made the passes stepped up; and the refugee grabbed him by the hand, and said:

"Hello, Whiskers, old boy. How did you get here? Allow me, Whiskers, my mother—Mr.—ah—by Jiminy, I don't believe I ever did know your real name, Whiskers, old boy!"

The man with the black whiskers bowed very politely to Doctor Higgs, and then started in and explained how her son had been in his vaudeville company, and how, two or three evenings ago, when they were giving a performance in the next town, he'd hypnotized him before an audience, and made him believe he was a Russian refugee. And all at once, when he happened to have his back turned, he'd slipped away off the stage, and they'd been hunting for him ever since, to bring him back to his right mind.

"That's right, mater," put in the refugee—I mean Doctor Higgs' son. "I don't remember anything about being a refugee; but from the present look of things I've been one, all right, and hiding up in that little secret room where I used to play when I was a kid. It's true that I've been knocking about with a show. But I'm through with it, mater. I've seen all of it that I want to; and I had my mind all made up to quit when we came to this burg, and come and tell you all about it, and then go back to college, and get my degree decent and respectable. All I wanted was a try at it, mater; and now I know the gay and free isn't all it's cracked up to be."

He chuckled her under the chin, and kissed her on the cheek, just as though she were a real mother—which, of course, she is; only we had never thought of her that way. And that cold Bloodless One actually shed tears of joy, she was so tickled to get her son back.

I've seen him since—three times—and he's so handsome and jolly.

He's coming to our reception next month. He said he wouldn't, though, unless I promised him six dances.

I don't like Higginbotham for a name, though. Do you?

NOT A MARRYING MAN



BY WINONA GODFREY

ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

HAVING concocted some nice scheme for our undoing, the devil proceeds to make us lonely; or, having devised a way to bless us against our wills, our guardian angel proceeds to make us lonely. Most things work two ways. Which way depends mostly upon your point of view.

Joyce, driven to desperation by the hot solitude of her ten-by-eleven bedroom, descended slowly to the six-by-eight veranda of the "Miramar," a cheap and stuffy, but highly respectable boarding house. A tepid breeze off the pavement brushed her face unrefreshingly, and she simply could not effect a smile in response to the lifted hat of the young man who was sitting on the top step. His general appearance indicated the companion piece to her own lonely dejection.

"It doesn't seem much cooler down here," she said, just to say something, while she tried without much effort to remember his name.

"Not much," he agreed.

She leaned against a dingy porch pillar, and watched the languid evening strollers pass on their way to the nearest soda fountain. They went in couples, most of them; two cigarette-smok-

ing youths, or two giggling girls, or a lover and his sweetheart, or a placid, middle-aged Darby and Joan. Yet, after all, it was such a lonesome world.

The young man on the step was turning his hat in his hands.

"Don't you think some ice cream would help some? Let's go down to the drug store, will you?"

"It would taste good." She returned his friendly smile now. "It's nice of you."

He rose with alacrity.

"You won't need a hat." Then, as they started down the walk: "This is good of you. It's sort of lonesome by yourself."

Her glance was kind.

"Are you lonesome, too?"

"Yes. Do you mean that you are?"

"Pretty near dying of it." But her tone was lighter.

The ice cream was so cooling, and they found each other so congenial that both had brightened up amazingly by the time they reached the sidewalk again.

"Come on, let's take a car ride," he suggested. "It'll be fine now."

"All right. But—I can't think of your name. I don't believe I caught it when Mrs. Brown introduced us."



At a bridle path two horsemen were suddenly upon them.

"Wing. Kerry Wing. I work at Jones & Metcalfe's."

"Oh, yes. And I work for Diller & Townsend."

"Stenographer?"

"Yes."

They boarded a car, and were lucky enough to find a seat together.

"Haven't been at Mrs. Brown's long, have you?" he began again.

"No. I'd only been there about a month when you came. I was at a good place before, but—I had to leave."

"That was me, too. And it's so hard to find a decent boarding house." He looked at her a little curiously. "I wonder if we had to leave for the same reason."

Her color heightened.

"I wonder. Well, it wasn't because I didn't pay my board."

He laughed.

"Well, you can tell me why some time."

Although the ride was all too short, they returned in vastly improved spirits.

"I've just enjoyed myself fine," said Joyce. "I haven't made many friends in the city, and I don't go out much, so I get kind of blue sometimes."

"We'll go again," he returned eagerly. "I tell you, I get tired of my own society. I'm awfully glad we got acquainted, Miss Owen."

"So am I," Joyce told him frankly.

She put out her hand rather shyly, and he took it in a firm, friendly grasp. She liked his handshake.

They did go again. They drifted into the habit of spending almost every evening in each other's company. She liked him. He was never

moody; always gentle, and pleasant, and considerate. And he was good-looking enough, too—not a pretty boy, of course, but tall and manly looking. And not the least bit flirtatious!

Then all of a sudden, she bethought herself. She had almost forgotten about *why* she had left that other good boarding house. She did not know whether it was some word or look of Kerry Wing's that reminded her. She stayed downtown to dinner that night, though it was an extravagance, and dodged into her room when she got home, to avoid meeting him.

The next night he was late to dinner, and she hurried through hers, and pretended not to be in when he came to knock softly on her door afterward.

Then for a night or two he was pleasant as ever at dinner, but left the house immediately after. She wondered if he had suspected; she was sorry if she had hurt him; and she so wished that she might be frank with him.

Finally he said: "Let's take a walk. I want to talk to you. The street affords the only privacy known to people who live in boarding houses."

"You never told me," he began slowly, "why you left that other boarding house."

She was surprised.

"Why, what made you think of that?"

"Well, I kind of suspect that I left mine for the same reason."

"Why do you suspect it?"

"I don't know."

She hesitated, not looking at him.

"I'll tell you," she said, after a moment. "I—I hope you'll understand."

"I will." He seemed confident of that.

"You see, it was like this: I was so lonesome in that other place. I'd work all day, and then stay in my room all evening. There wasn't any parlor there, and the other people usually went out evenings."

Kerry Wing nodded.

"Well—a young man came there, and he asked me to go places with him, and I went. I didn't like him especially, you understand, but I was lonely, and I wanted a little amusement. It never occurred to me that he had any serious intentions; then he—wanted me to marry him, and got mad because I wouldn't. Said I'd been leading him on, and all that sort of thing."

She paused, with flushed cheeks and defiant eyes.

Wing was looking straight ahead, a little smile on his lips more reminiscent than mirthful.

"Well?" he said slowly.

"Well, I left the house because he insisted on staying on and annoying me. He couldn't understand that I didn't want to marry any one, much less him."

"Not any one?" said Kerry Wing.

"No."

"Why?"

The girl did not answer for a moment.

The pretty color faded, leaving her rather pale, as she usually was, and her whole face seemed to settle into a sort of weariness. She spoke in a low, firm voice:

"I'll tell you. There were five children in our family, and my father was a clerk—he never made more than twenty dollars a week. My mother meant well, but she wasn't a good manager; she didn't have any talent for being poor. I expect you've noticed families like ours. If one of the boys needed new shoes, he got a red necktie; if mother needed a petticoat, she bought a new feather for her hat; and if one of the girls was freezing for a jacket, why, she'd probably have a cheap velveteen skirt. We never had anything, and we were always in debt. Father was always railing about the rich man keeping the poor man down, and about the trusts, and about how hard he worked, and how little he got for it, which was true enough as far as it went."

There was no anger in her tone, no special protest, only a mere statement of fact.

Wing nodded thoughtfully.

"I know how it is."

"We children were all rather ambitious. We wanted to go to school, and learn how to do something. But as soon as we were old enough to do anything, father lost his place, and couldn't seem to get anything else that amounted to much. Well, that was how it was. As soon as one of us would get a little saved for more schooling or any purpose, it would have to go to one of the others, or to keeping the family. Something would always come up; somebody would be sick or out of work, and nobody could get ahead. One of my sisters and two of my brothers got married, and things are going on in the same old way with them. Poverty and children—children that haven't got much of a show, it seems to me."

"Maybe there's some compensation," suggested the young man musingly.

"Maybe there is," Joyce put in quickly. "But I made up my mind when I was sixteen that I didn't want any of it in mine. Why, I wouldn't have children

for anything, and have to see them going through what we did, and feeling like we did about things we couldn't have and learn, and we were just ordinary kids, too."

"Yes, I know," said Wing again.

"So I made up my mind I'd never marry a poor man."

"He might get rich," said Wing.

"Well, there are men that you know will always be poor; they're just not the money-making kind. They might be real good, nice fellows, too, but they'll never get ahead."

"I expect I'm one of 'em," said Wing, in a colorless voice.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, without conviction.

They walked on for a few minutes in silence. Her expression remained a little tense, but his seemed to be clearing wonderfully.

"I'll confess now," he announced presently, in a lighter tone. "I'm not a marrying man, either. I'm awfully glad you told me this, because that's just the way I feel about things. You see, my father died when my two sisters and I were little, and I've always had to toe the mark, I tell you, to keep things going. We lived in a little town, and it's only been in the last six months that I could get out and breathe, you might say. Sisters both got married, and mother's visiting with them a while, so I came up to the city to look around. I got this job, but there don't seem to be much ahead. About that boarding house," he smiled, "I just had a hunch that it was that way with you."

"And you said you wondered——"

"Yes. You see there was a girl there, and I felt kind of lost and lonesome, not knowing a soul here out of the office, so I'd ask her to go out to the band concert or somewhere, and here all of a sudden the old lady comes and asks me what are my intentions!"

He laughed boyishly, showing even white teeth that made him almost handsome.

"How absurd!" said she.

"Wasn't it? So I cleared out. Why, I don't want to get married! For one

thing, I don't feel like I had the right to. It isn't fair to a woman, it seems to me, when a fellow has no prospects. And then, of course, there's mother to look out for."

"Most men never think about the fairness of it," said Joyce.

"Well, I don't want to get married," he repeated. "But it don't seem like a fellow ought never to look at a girl just because he don't want to marry her. Do you think so?"

He went on, without waiting for an answer:

"Now, take you and me. You don't want to get married—to a poor man, anyway," he put in whimsically, "and I don't want to get married——"

"Not even to a rich girl?" she laughed.

"Nope! And we both understand the situation, know just how the other one feels; so I don't see why we can't be friends. We're both kind of lonesome, and need somebody to go around with, and you know I haven't got any intentions, and I know you don't suspect any. So!" with a little flourish. "Are you agreeable?"

"I sure am," she cordially exclaimed. "And I'm so glad it's all straight and understood."

"Then let's have a soda," said he.

It was a pleasant friendship. Both felt the empty place in their lives filled. To have a pleasant companion who expected nothing but the moment's pleasure; a comradeship with no past and no future; and both too unread and too unanalytical to know that such a situation holds the slightest danger. They could not be expected to realize that the parallel was sitting on a keg of powder smoking a delicious, peaceful, evening pipe.

Their amusements were simple and inexpensive—car rides, free band concerts in the parks, candy or sundaes, once in a while an evening at a cheap theater.

When the other girls in the office tried to tease Joyce about her cavalier, she merely smiled without embarrassment. When the boys in the other office asked Kerry who the peach was that he seemed to have a patent on, he replied, with easy candor: "Nothing in it!"

No longer did Joyce droop in her close room after a day at the typewriter; no longer did Kerry lounge disconsolately around cigar stands or "shoot" billiards with some chance acquaintance. No companionship could have been more satisfying or more innocent.

Joyce had learned that Kerry was the gentlest gentleman in the world, and Kerry knew that Joyce was the sweetest, purest, and jolliest girl a fellow ever had for a pal. Which is as it should be between friends, isn't it?

And three months passed.

It was one Sunday night in September that they had been sitting a long time on a park bench, watching the moon rise, and discussing every topic under heaven that came within their range of thought. Except love and marriage.

They had started leisurely homeward when at a bridle path two horsemen were suddenly upon them. Joyce, startled, drew back hastily against Kerry, and he put out his arm to support her. But he did not at once withdraw it. Instead, he snatched her close to his heart, pressing his cheek against hers. He released her as quickly, and they went on without a word, breathless, voiceless, bewildered.

Then suddenly, as if by mutual consent, they began to talk, about nothing, about anything, with a pitiful, feverish gayety. They parted with the usual friendly "good night." But in his room Kerry sat with a drawn mouth, and Joyce threw herself upon her bed, to stare with wide eyes into the darkness.



"Yes, go!" s'e said, in a strange, fierce, little voice.

When she came down to breakfast, Kerry had eaten his and gone. He did not come home to dinner. It was nothing, she kept telling herself; nothing at all, a jest.

The next day he was back; they talked as usual, they walked out as usual, yet upon their formerly artless glances, their formerly frank lips, there seemed to be set a guard, as if they were continually repeating to themselves: "It shall not happen again."

A little more time passed thus. Their excursions now took them more to moving-picture shows, and to places where they would not be alone; when they were alone they fell often into long si-

lences, and they almost never now touched upon personalities. Yet neither in the heart was facing the issue, or even admitting the existence of any possible crisis in their relations.

They pretended to themselves—and were quite persuaded that there was no pretense about it—that nothing had occurred; they saw nothing, felt nothing. They were like somnambulists walking with heads up and eyes open, yet only vaguely conscious, if at all, that they were striding off a precipice. Slowly, too, the on-guard mood slackened as each began to think the incident disregarded and forgotten by the other.

One evening they had been out on some little jaunt, and it began to rain before they could reach home. At the foot of the steps, even in the darkness, Kerry observed Joyce shiver a little. A wave of sudden tenderness engulfed him, a tenderness with no taint of passion, that brought an ache to his throat, that yearned over her with something almost like pity that the world should ever misuse her.

"Are you cold?" he whispered.

And again his arms gently infolded her. She leaned yielding against him. He kissed her. It was dark, and the rain fell on them forgotten.

They made no vows or any excuses. In a few moments they parted for the night in silence.

To love and to be loved is sweet, however unwelcome and ultimately unhappy it may be, yet those two felt in all the thrill of that love confessed a sense of defeat—they had been so sure of themselves, so innocently and fearlessly confident. And with them, love confessed did not—could not—mean love triumphant.

A night and a day of mingled happiness and despair possessed them before they met again. Then upon a bench in the park they at last looked this fateful thing squarely in the face.

"You see how it is with me," said Kerry simply. "I love you, and I can't trust myself with you any longer. The first time, I—well, I thought it needn't happen again. But it did."

Joyce did not reply. She was looking

down at her hands, loosely clasped in her lap.

She could not resist.

"Do you—care, too?"

"You know it," she said quietly.

Neither dared speak again for a moment, then—"Thank you!" said Kerry.

"So," he began presently, "I've made up my mind to go back home. It's either have mother come here soon or me go there. As for you and me—it's better for me to go, I guess. I'm makin' fifteen dollars a week on a job that's uncertain. I haven't got much education, and I haven't got a good trade. All my prospects amount to is that I'm willing to work—and I've got my mother to support. You know all this, Joyce, without my telling it, and if you're willing to take a chance." He looked at her wistfully.

"Have your ideas really changed?" asked the girl, in a low voice.

The young man groaned.

"No, they haven't. I haven't any right to get married, I know. It isn't fair to you—"

"Mine haven't changed either, Kerry. Only now—now I understand why people do shut their eyes to things." Her voice died away.

"If I only had any prospects," choked Kerry.

She did not reply.

He tried to muster a hope.

"Something might turn up. We're young—we could wait a while."

He looked at her sitting quietly beside him—a slight figure neatly dressed; her small hands, with fingers a little blunted at the ends from many days at the typewriter; her fair hair becomingly arranged; her face showing a natural refinement; the rightful hope and ardor of youth denied by a little weary droop of the lips, the shadow in the honest, hazel eyes that had looked too much on the dreary makeshifts and balked hopes of life.

As he gazed, like the reverse side of a medal, he saw his sister as he had seen her last, sitting in her messy little kitchen, her baby at her breast; the washtub in the middle of the floor, the

boiler steaming on the stove, the unwashed breakfast dishes piled on the table; and his mother, just arrived, rolling up her sleeves, ready to "pitch in."

He did not know that Jennie was unhappy, but he remembered, as he went off to the station, saying to himself, with an emotion compounded of amusement, distaste, and genuine regret: "Gee! Not for mine!"

Again his throat ached with that tender pity—the wish to shield her, not to bend that slender body under heavier burdens and drearier tasks.

"No!" he cried, with a sudden vehemence that made her look at him, startled. "I'm not goin' to do it! I'm goin' away, Joyce, sweetheart, till I'm man enough to make it right for you. I know well enough how men feel when they take girls like you, and if they don't feel like they ought to afterward, I would, and right now's the time to quit!"

He sprang to his feet, and she rose, too, her eyes half dazed, half frightened, searching his face. For a second they stared hungrily at each other. Then she put her hand against his breast, and pushed him away.

"Yes, go!" she said, in a strange, fierce, little voice. "Go right now. What's the use waitin'? Nothing ever came right in my world. Go on, now, Kerry, and let's get it over with."

He seized the outstretched hand in both his, then suddenly turned, and, pulling his hat over his eyes, walked away.

The girl stood motionless, looking after him until the twilight had swallowed him up, then she sat down on the bench again. For a long time she sat there, tearless, laying tiny and particular tucks in her gingham skirt—till it was quite dark.

If, during the next few days, some light was gone from Joyce's eyes, her careless office companions did not notice it; if her fellow boarders, curious at the sudden departure of Kerry Wing, tried to read the explanation in her well-masked face, they found little satisfaction there.

She fought fiercely to retain that outward composure, and to achieve that courage and reasonableness that she must have to live on. She could see her life going on through the years with no deviation from its dull routine, with no hope of change or joy. A door to freedom through a profitable marriage—the dream of most unhappy working women—could not be a possibility

now as it had once been to her. Though a millionaire should come a-wooing now, it could bring no happiness, because the only man she would ever want was gone. And youth can never imagine any change in its own emotions.

Followed a recurrence of that despair that said nothing ever came right in her world, and finally, when the cries of her heart were no longer to be stifled by



"I'm going to take a chance," she said.

threats and fears, by reason, or by an attempted resignation, she surrendered to that which is at least stronger than reason. She no longer feared the stings of poverty, or any exigency with which life might confront her. She wanted Kerry! All other demands on fate she waived; all responsibilities, all trials, all toil, that might come as part of that gift she accepted, carelessly and joyfully. Nor had she any more fear to burden him than to endure herself.

But now, completely awake at last, she saw with a new and greater terror. Now, asking nothing, and willing to give all, opportunity was gone. Kerry would never again seek her; she had no means by which to seek Kerry. It was over.

And now she fed on wretchedness that makes no distinction between high and low. Pride kept the eyes dry by day that wept bitter tears at night. She could not bear it, but—it must be borne.

And only a week of all life gone by.

It was a wild night, the wind whimpering around the windows, and the rain tapping insistently on the glass; a sad

and lonely night, a setting for regrets. Joyce in the midst of hers was startled by a light rap upon her door. As she rose to open it, it opened, and there was Kerry Wing.

"Oh!" she said, thinking her thoughts perhaps embodied.

"Hello!" said he, in a voice of joy.

He stood straight, and his eyes were bright, and his lips were smiling and confident. He strode in and shut the door, and confronted her happily.

"I've fought it out," he announced, without preamble. "And I've made up my mind. I'm yours and you're mine, and I'm going to have you. I don't care what happens to us. I'm ready. I'll do what's right by you—I'll do all I can for you. But we got to take the chance. It's the way of the world, and we can't make a way different from the world's way. Haven't you been thinkin', too? Are you willing to risk it?"

He held out his arms. She walked into them, and clasped her own around his neck.

"I'm going to take a chance," she said.



Locust Blossoms

LOCUST flowers this morn are strung
Round a rugged bough I knew
As a homely thing, not young;
Not a place for birds to woo;
No soft nestlings here have swung,
Yet its faith with spring keeps true.

Yesterday it gave no sign;
Lo, a miracle to-day!
Flowers, like fairies on a vine,
Drip from every languid spray.
Here's a bee whose senses fine
Caught the perfume far away!

Dear one, in this scented hour
Comes a tender thought to me:
Though harsh age's crabbed power
Steal upon me ruthlessly,
I shall still break out in flower—
Blossom fair with love for thee!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

The Joy Bringer

A STORY OF THE PAINTED DESERT

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

Author of "The Power and the Glory," "Huldah," "The Return," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Clifford McFarland, a beautiful young Kentucky girl, thinks she is eloping with Julius Crittenden. It is a very dark night, and after she is married, she finds her husband is not Julius, but his brother Heath. Heath is a big-hearted, ingenuous Westerner, who is very much in love with Clifford, and, misunderstanding her kindness, has thought she was in love with him. At first Clifford is furious, but as she is penniless, she agrees to accompany Heath to the desert, but insisting that she will be to him only a sister. On their arrival in Oraibi Clifford is given a home with an Indian woman named Tereva, while Heath remains at his store. They see little of each other. There is an artist there, named Schaum, whom Clifford has known before, and who devotes himself to her, rather to her annoyance. Heath's mother and Clifford's uncle come to Oraibi on a visit.

CHAPTER XI.

CLIFFE made her uncle as comfortable as a man could be made who regarded with suspicion all of his surroundings. Schaum came up to the parlor in the sky so frequently that Major McFarland was more than ever affronted by Heath's neglect of his niece.

"You're happy here—you like it—do you?" the major asked as he sat with Cliffe and Schaum one evening in the parlor in the sky. He regarded his niece doubtfully, incredulously.

Cliffe turned a shining face upon him.

"Like it?" she echoed, with a somewhat hectic enthusiasm. "I never was so blissfully happy in my life. I adore it all. It's new—new—new! It's like leaving the old Clifford McFarland and walking into a new life without dying. Reva takes me visiting, and they're so nice to me. I think they're the most hospitable creatures I ever saw. If we go in at mealtimes, when the big bowl of beans and rabbit stew is set out on the floor, they always invite me to the sheepskin where the mother of the clan sits. They urge me to help myself; but

I've never got so I can stick two fingers down in the dish and spoon out a mouthful without spilling any. However," she concluded cheerfully. "they all enjoy seeing me try."

Her uncle received this enthusiasm with an inarticulate sound somewhere between a grunt and a snort. His look said: "Eating with niggers—a McFarland!"

Schaum leaned back in his chair, his indecipherable gaze fixed on Cliffe's glowing countenance. It wandered sometimes to the little hands which talked almost as eloquently as the voice, his ear taking in the wooing melody of her speech. He looked at the major's uncomprehending impatience, and smiled.

"Has Mrs. Crittenden ever been abroad? In Egypt?" he asked. "I have my painter's enthusiasm for this place, because it's a fine field for my work; but, after all, there are other things in the world."

The major turned with relief to speech he could understand.

"Yes, thank Heaven, there are," he said devoutly. "Cliffe's been talking to me about the singing; and then a fellow

**The first installment of "The Joy Bringer" appeared in the July number of this magazine.*



"You're going away," he said. "I'm glad."

got up on the roof here and gave us a sample. Town crier? Well, his voice would make the fortune of an auctioneer. That's what it sounded like to me, or the men with the megaphone on a race course."

They showed the major a collection of bahoes or plumed prayer sticks, of which he remarked:

"Very interesting, I am sure."

Cliffe admitted that she had planted a prayer stick herself, and told them that she had prayed for rain.

"Tereva says it was a good prayer," she told them thoughtfully. "The meal looked like rain as I scattered it; and the wind took the feathers on my baho and carried them out so that they fluttered—fluttered—fluttered like nothing on earth but begging hands. They prayed."

The major was bending the long cottonwood switch of a rain baho in his fingers, regarding it judiciously.

"So you prayed for rain," he remarked. "Why?"

Cliffe looked at her uncle with a laugh which faded, against her will, apparently, into seriousness.

"I prayed for rain," she repeated. "I prayed for rain. You shouldn't ask why, Uncle Horace. You're the one who compared me—in your notes, don't you remember?—to a desert land. That's what the desert's always asking—rain."

Cliffe looked across and surprised Schaum, the veil for once withdrawn, looking at her with a man's eyes. She was suddenly hot with indignation, and a sort of shame. How dared he? Was she not Heath's wife? Had she not labeled and

set this man aside as a creature different from the others; cold-blooded except where his art was concerned? Yet who can devise a reasonable manner of resenting a look? Naming the thing gives it undue importance. It is best forgotten, and this is what Cliffe understood to do.

It was the next day that Xavier Schaum got a chance to speak alone with Cliffe.

"Your mother-in-law doesn't like me—why?" he said.

"Why should she?" Cliffe answered his question with a question.

The artist laughed meaningly.

"You aren't so inconsiderate as to inquire into her reasons for dislike. They don't feed my conceit. The mother-in-law always mistrusts the other man—whether he's dangerous or not. Now, your husband treats me with the utmost confidence."

"Why should he not?" Cliffe seemed to have settled down to a formula.

"No reason on earth, so far as my abilities for making mischief are concerned; but every reason, if you reckon in my evil intentions," retorted Schaum lightly. "It goes against me to see a creature like you throwing herself away. I should feel myself committing a worthy act—a thing I don't often attain to—if I resolved myself into a wedge which split such an arrangement."

"I suppose you must talk about so much nonsense," Cliffe responded, with an air of half-impatient indifference.

Before the advent of the major and Mrs. Crittenden, the white population of Oraibi consisted of little more than a half-dozen souls; the three teachers at the school; the doctor, who was supposed to divide his time so as to be three days in the week at the dispensary; and the field matron. Over at the Menonite mission there was a family of German-speaking Kansans, a dour-faced, gentle-spoken folk; kinder, in fact, than their grim, bleak creed. They drove in of a Sunday morning, the women and children in a big farm wagon, or perhaps one of them on a shaggy, knowing little pony, which she managed with the same heavy but effective hand she applied to the Indians. It was marvelous to see this group assimilate with the life about them in any degree. Yet, at the best, they could offer—meant to offer—little companionship to the world's people. It did not seem remarkable that Heath had been glad of Schaum's presence; nor was it possible for any one of the bohanas to withdraw from so tiny a circle. Though the artist had moved his traps over to the doctor's diggings so as to make room for Mrs. Crittenden, he still ate at Heath's table.

Esson-Chee had been trained to domestic work by the sisters at St. Michael's; and the crude establishment at the foot of the mesa soon felt the touch of Annie's skilled hand. Like the major, Mrs. Crittenden saw little beauty in this strange country where her boy lived so strange a life. Yet there was a sixth sense in her that responded to anything

she could turn to account as home-maker and hostess; the living apartments which Heath had supplied, man fashion, with bare utilities and conveniences, now drew upon the wareroom of the store, and assumed an air of hospitality and cheer.

She entertained them in Heath's house—the major, Cliffe, and, of course, Schaum, who was part of her regular household. But the major seemed to shrink from his old sweetheart. Plainly there was a cloud between them. More and more he preferred to stay with his niece. Finally one afternoon when they chanced to be alone he went at some length into her financial affairs.

"So you see, my dear, you are in prospect a moderately rich woman—and all because of that mining stock that your dear father had the sound judgment to put your little inheritance into, and your blundering old uncle had always held to be worthless."

Major McFarland concluded thus his report to Cliffe on the condition of the Palo Pinto mines. The movement there, it seemed, was genuine; and while there was a possibility of large returns, his expert reported to him that there was a certainty of moderate gain. As yet, no dividend had been paid on the new stock; and it was by no means sure that there would be any at the end of the first year, since initial expenses were heavy.

"But I could advance you whatever you need," the major wound up this statement. "I——" He hesitated a moment, and added swiftly: "I should be glad to see you independent, my dear. There was a time when I thought a little dependence might be salutary, but"—a flush showed on his thin, aristocratic features, and the eyes that were like Cliffe's own under the bushy white brows looked very bright as his shoulders straightened themselves—"I don't like to see a McFarland dependent on a person whose—well, I will not say whose manner of giving is grudging, but I will, if you don't mind, state that some things look to me boorish."

Cliffe had taken the announcement of her prospects with a certain passivity which somewhat surprised her uncle.

"I don't think I could go abroad with you, Uncle Horace," she said finally. "Thank you very much for the invitation. It's awfully good of you to want to take so troublesome a person as I am."

"You understand, Cliffe, you could go with me to Paris now, if you cared to do so—quite independently—your income will justify it—you will be under no obligation to your uncle." He scanned her drooping face keenly. "What's the matter?" he inquired at length.

"I don't want to leave—Oraibi," Cliffe finally ventured in a very low tone.

"You don't want to leave—good Lord!" The major broke off and stood regarding her for a moment. "If it's the sights and smells around here that you're wedded to, my love," he suggested, in a slightly ironic voice, "we'll try Egypt for the rest of the winter and the early spring. My remembrance is that they have nearly as many fleas, and other small, creeping things, in Cairo as in Oraibi."

The girl came close to him and spoke impulsively, putting out both small, fluttering hands and laying them against his breast, where he prisoned them in his own, looking earnestly down into her eyes as she spoke.

"Uncle Horace," she began, hurrying, as though she feared unless she made haste she would not speak at all, "I—I've read all that you wrote me in that letter, you know—where you told me I'd better go with Heath. I'm not sure I fully understand. I know I'm not ready to answer it yet. But the answer to it—the answer to me—will come here in the desert, at Oraibi. I know that."

"My dear Cliffe," said the major gently, "I was foolishly confident of my conclusions in that letter. Most of the stuff I set down there was an old bachelor's vain imaginings. You confute all my logic at any one of a half-dozen turns. I'm afraid I was mistaken about Heath Crittenden, too. It seems to me that he isn't the man for you. He—he doesn't appreciate you."

"Say it out," breathed Cliffe. "You

see it, too, don't you? He doesn't love me, does he, Uncle Horace?"

"And you—oh, my poor girl. I never thought of that! Why, the young savage—the idiot—the barbarian!"

"I mustn't let you talk that way," Cliffe demurred, with rising color. "It isn't exactly as you think."

"No—no—of course not," the major made haste to amend, conceiving that his attitude was wounding to Cliffe's proper womanly vanity.

"Laying the question of—love—aside," Cliffe resumed gently; and, oh, such eyes to look at one over that speech, such a voice to utter it! "Laying by the question of whether we care for each other, I feel that I have an obligation toward Heath. He would have freed me back there in Kentucky, and I wouldn't. I elected to come with him to Oraibi."

"That was my fault," asserted the major generously. "I put the pressure on you—poor girl. I said to you in just the way I knew you would find unendurable that you had no money, and gave you to understand that you could expect nothing from me—a nice old brute I was! You've got the money now. Come, my dear, treat this young man to a little lofty indifference, and see what results of it. I've talked matters over with Annie—or tried to. She seems to feel alienated from me by the circumstances. I think you would better go with your old uncle, who loves you, and let the civilizing of this young savage come about as it may."

"I don't suppose he'd miss me," she said thoughtfully. "I've never been anything but a sort of torment to him, I believe. And he's got his mother here now."

She surprised a look on the major's face that had in it a positive twinge.

"I seem to bring trouble wherever I go," she commented. "Of course I do—because I am trouble. To think of you and the dearest woman in the world falling out over me and my miserable affairs. I can't have that. It won't do. Uncle Horace, if my life never finds its answer, its fulfillment, I don't intend to cost you all that."

"Well, of course, it goes a little hard to lose out with Annie after she'd come to me so unexpectedly, and seemed ready to forget the animosities of thirty years," the major agreed huskily; "but I haven't a ghost of hope now."

The girl's eyes glowed. She ran to the little loophole window by the doorway and peered out.

"I'm not the one to go to Paris with you, Uncle Horace," she said; "but I know who is, and whom you're going to take. Here she comes," as the buckboard from the store rattled into the street below. "You step into the back room—just stay there a moment—I want to have a chance to speak to her first, and then you'll understand."

There was a sound of some one coming up the ladder; some one who mounted timidly and paused often to adjust carefully gathered skirts. Cliffe fairly pushed the tall major toward the inner room, drew the curtains, and was at the doorway in time to welcome her visitor.

"I've come to say good-by, Cliffe," Mrs. Crittenden announced, in a subdued tone. "I—the desert doesn't seem to suit me very well. I think the altitude makes me nervous. Heath is willing to have me go now, and I don't feel that I'm doing any good by staying."

Cliffe was taking off the other's wraps and drawing her to a seat near the fire.

"I don't understand Heath very well," Annie's voice went plaintively on. "I must be getting old. I don't understand young people as I used to. Sometimes I think the boy would rather have me go away."

Cliffe forbore to

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state that his attitude of mind toward herself seemed to be exactly similar.

"Uncle Horace is going, too," she announced, with intentional abruptness. "He has been talking to me about traveling."

"About your going abroad—with him?" cried the mother-in-law.

"Dear," said Cliffe softly, "you are the one to go abroad with Uncle Horace, not I."

She bent and spoke in a lowered tone, glancing toward the curtains, sure that the major would not attempt to overhear. Mrs. Crittenden blushed like a girl. She answered with her head turned aside.

"No—oh, no," she said nervously. "You don't understand."

"Maybe I do," whispered Cliffe, close to her shoulder. "You'll be sure to marry again. You aren't fitted to stand alone in the world. You're formed to make some unworthy man happy. Of course you'll marry."

"I have thought of it," the widow ad



She flung herself down with a cry, protecting Pup's body.

mitted, in as low a tone as though she had known the dangerous proximity of the major. "After Julius was so unkind, and when I came out here and found that Heath didn't—didn't—need me, I began to think that I might—as you say——" She broke off before the fatal word, and blushed again. "Of course, a woman at my age doesn't approach marriage as a girl of your age would, Cliffe," she went on, after a time. "There's a certain element of the ludicrous in calling her a bride. What seemed to me possible was that I might find some kind, pleasant man—some friend of my youth, maybe—who wanted a considerate companion, a sympathetic woman to take care of him. I think I could hope to make a marriage like that."

Cliffe caught her mother-in-law by the shoulders, and burst out laughing in her face. She forgot the possibly listening major.

"Oh, you hypocrite!" she cried. "You know you're a charmer. You're perfectly aware that my Uncle Horace—among others—has adored you always."

She remembered, and glanced across the room. The ceremonial blankets hung in straight white folds.

"Let me tell you, my lady," she added, with a breath of laughter still in her tones, "there was a fine pulling of caps for my Uncle Horace—among the girls there in Louisville. The idea of your talking about hunting up some valetudinarian old gentleman and engaging as an unpaid wife nurse."

"Cliffe," said Mrs. Crittenden solemnly, "I'm going to say something to you that I have never breathed to any other human being. It's the reason that I couldn't—out of all the world—marry Horace McFarland. Long ago, when I was still Judge Crittenden's wife, Horace was—he would have been my—my lover."

The words were uttered in a mere breath of sound. She drew back to regard Cliffe with wide, serious eyes. That young woman maintained her gravity with some effort.

"Of course he was," she rejoined en-

thusiastically. "Everybody knows that. Do you mean to tell me that you haven't forgiven a mild indiscretion that was, after all, a tribute to your charms?"

"Oh, that isn't all," Mrs. Crittenden whispered; and now, glancing timidly about the room, she, too, seemed to examine the curtains; then bent closer, and forwarded her sentences expressively since they must be uttered so low. "I never thought it particularly unbecoming in a man to—of course, they're all that way—but I—Cliffe—I was in love with him!"

She drew away, and examined her daughter-in-law's face for signs of sudden alienation. Cliffe's smile had tears added to it. The thing was so quaintly like a little girl telling a grown-up friend her childish views on matters of the heart.

"I don't wonder," she said, in a low voice. "Uncle Horace can be very charming and delightful—to those he loves."

"Oh, but such sins have to be paid for," averred Annie Crittenden, speaking louder, in her distress. "Now you know why, out of all the world, I couldn't think of marrying Horace. Besides," she added naively, "he hasn't asked me."

There was a slight stir. Cliffe declared afterward that she heard only one step, and the major was across the room, and had caught his love's hand.

"I've been a coward," he said; "but Cliffe has formulated my petition, Annie—and it's before the court."

He looked down into Mrs. Crittenden's flushing, perturbed face, where, however, Cliffe did not see so much surprise as might have been expected. Being a woman herself, she drew her own conclusions, and slipped from the room.

"Oh, there are reasons that Cliffe knows nothing about, Horace," Mrs. Crittenden protested, "why I—you—long ago——"

She broke off while the red deepened in her cheek; and she stood looking down at the hand which she had not withdrawn from his clasp.

"Tell me, Annie," he begged, "what

is it that has stood between you and me all these years? I didn't half hear what you said a minute ago. Why couldn't you think of marrying me? Out of all the world—me? Why couldn't you love me a little?"

"It was because I loved you too well," Annie Crittenden whispered. "Years ago, Horace, when I wasn't free to. It was wicked. Such things have to be expiated. Oh!"

The exclamation was one of mingled surrender and protest, for the major had gathered his timid love in a very capable embrace.

The reconciliation between her uncle and Mrs. Crittenden was a source of great happiness to Cliffe. Schaum had gone to First Mesa, he said, on a sketching trip; and for a day or two the affair remained a secret among these three. Each, for some individual reason, failed to inform Heath of the matter. Cliffe herself held almost no communication with her husband. The major, despite the influx of geniality that came with his new happiness, avoided any conversation with the younger man. Mrs. Crittenden allowed herself to be persuaded into an immediate marriage, agreed that they would drive over to the Mennonite mission for the wedding; and when Cliffe and her uncle arrived dressed for the occasion they found that she had not yet informed her son.

She had altered and fitted the suit of tan-colored cloth which Cliffe furnished as fairly suitable bride's wear. With the removal of her mourning, she had laid aside, too, something of the subdued widow's manner. Yet, when Cliffe asked if Heath had been informed, she dropped back into it, a pucker of anxiety on her gentle, madonna brow.

"I couldn't," she protested. "It seems to me almost indelicate for a woman to talk to her son about getting married—the mother getting married, I mean—of course, it's different for young people."

Cliffe stood in the little entry back of the store. Her uncle was in the sitting room; and outside waited the buckboard, with four stout Indian ponies.

"Uncle Horace might—did you want me to tell Heath?" the girl inquired suddenly.

"If you only would," Mrs. Crittenden cried.

Without further parley, Cliffe stepped into the store, where Heath was behind the counter with his Indian helper, waiting on customers.

"Could you give me a minute?" she asked, not allowing herself time to be frightened. "I have something very important to tell you."

From where she stood she could see that Heath's face went suddenly pale; there was an instant sharpening in the lines of his features, a tensing of the muscles in his figure; but the fingers that measured the calico were steady; the blue eyes did not turn toward her as he said in a slightly lowered tone:

"Just a minute—I'll be with you."

She went back into the room. Mrs. Crittenden and the major had gone through to the warehouse ostensibly to look at some baskets; really, no doubt, to be alone with their late-found, precious bliss.

Heath's step sounded in the entryway.

"Now—what is it?" he demanded, coming barely inside the door, holding its knob as he spoke.

"They left it for me to tell you," Cliffe began anxiously. "I hope you won't mind. I am expecting you'll be pleased."

She came to a halt. He looked at her oddly, examining the room for a hint as to her message. Finally, glancing through the window, he caught sight of the buckboard and team.

"You're going away," he said instantly, with relaxing features. "I'm glad."

There fell a lengthened silence between them. Cliffe stood looking down at her interlocked hands, unable to think of one word to say, scarcely finding voice to utter it, had she been offered the word.

"That's what you meant, isn't it?" Heath asked at length. "I'm sorry if I've made a mistake. You must forgive me if I've offended you—hurt your feelings. I seem to be always doing



The tall, black leader raised his whip, and brought it down across the edge of Cliffe's skirts.

that. As we're situated, my mere existence is an offense to you. That's why I hoped—why I said—well, tell me what it is."

"Your mother and my Uncle Horace are going over to the mission to be married." Cliffe gave her news without enthusiasm, not at all as she had hoped to utter it.

"My mother and—say it again, please."

"Your mother and Uncle Horace," Cliffe repeated, gathering some warmth as she spoke. "He's always loved her; and now at last they're going to be happy—I hope. Your mother's timid about you. She's been trying to tell you for a week; and finally, when we were all ready to go over, I found that she hadn't said a word. You aren't angry, are you?"

He had walked to the table, and stood beside it, looking down, turning over the textbooks and papers without seeing them.

"No, of course, I'm not angry," he said finally. "Good Lord, what a brute

I must be, when you're all expecting me to blow up over a simple piece of news like that—good news, too, I suppose—for her! Where is mother?"

Horace McFarland entered the room from the store. The two men shook hands. Heath kissed his mother, and hurried away to make himself ready for the wedding.

"I'll saddle my *caballo* and follow you," he told them.

And Cliffe's last glimpse of him was standing looking after them, a lonely figure; one whom the happiness of others seemed further to rob.

CHAPTER XII.

Cliffe had taken Firefly down to the school barn to be shod; the thoroughbred could not stand traveling barefoot as did the desert-born horses. Charlie, who was school blacksmith as well as policeman, was not about, and she tied the mare, knowing that he would understand why she was there, and shoe her if he came in.

Then she turned away to walk a little with Pup, unwilling to go to the store, knowing, as she thought, that Schaum was not in the village, and it being lesson time, so that a visit to the school was out of the question. She gathered up stones and bits of wood, and tried to teach Pup to bring them back to her when she threw them. His education did not progress very rapidly, being interrupted for some extraordinary antics in which he naturally excelled so far as to make her clumsy human instruction appear ludicrously impertinent. She was passing the mouth of an arroyo in the open plain, when her name, cautiously pronounced, arrested her attention. Wheeling sharply, she met Schaum.

"Why, I thought you were over at Second Mesa!" she cried.

"So does everybody else," he assented, with a smile. "So I shall be when I've had a little talk with you. Do you mind walking up this way? We can't be seen from the store or the school—and the missionaries don't count."

Cliffe hesitated, a sense of disaster strong upon her.

"Why, no," she answered haltingly. "I'll come for a minute. But I left the mare to be shod at the barn. I must go for her pretty soon."

"It won't be any use," Schaum told her. "This is the third afternoon of the Bean Dance. All the men will be in the street procession. By the way, you'll have to look out for that—but I'll explain about it when we've had our little talk. I'll attend to it before you go back."

Cliffe gave half-hearted attention to her companion's words. She was offended at the manner of Schaum's approach; repelled by this repeated hint that there was a secret understanding between himself and her. For a moment she debated turning back. Then she feared to look silly, to make much of what was really not important. The situation brought a surge of indignation against Heath. If he had not put her from him thus, such a disagreeable occurrence would have been impossible.

The sound of Schaum's voice in her ears recalled her.

"I shouldn't have dared to hope, only that I saw you refused to go with your uncle. Whatever brought you, of course I know it isn't Heath that keeps you here. Is it I?"

"You?" The startled syllable held unconscious contempt. Schaum as a man was not to be despised; but as a lover—to Cliffe—he appeared less than himself.

It was plain that he was stung. He reddened under the smooth tan. The hand hanging at his side clenched and unclenched itself. Yet, after a dubious manner, he began once more to walk beside Cliffe, glancing now and again at the beautiful, averted face.

"Yes, I," he said finally. "Is it a new idea to you? I've hung around here for three weeks after I was due in New York to attend to an important exhibition. You and I have been together a good deal more than you and Heath Crittenden. You've let me cover your walls with my sketches. You pretended an interest in my work."

"I didn't pretend an interest—I felt it," Cliffe defended herself.

"You let me neglect my painting for you," Schaum accused her. "You were always coming between my work and me. My work—"

His voice broke fiercely on the word. He showed the angry resentment of the loyal husband against the enchantress who has beguiled him from his true allegiance.

"A woman in my situation has no business interfering with your plans, Mr. Schaum," Cliffe said. "I—we—I thought we'd settled this thing."

"Your situation," Schaum flung at her derisively in the heat of anger. "It seems to me that women require a tremendous amount of beating around the bush. I've shown you freely how I felt. You never really shut me off. So long as I played the lover, you contented yourself with prim looks and implied reproofs. When I'm an avowed suitor, ready to speak to your uncle and get the thing on a reasonable basis, you go right up in the air."

The beauty of her indignant face added to his anger. Why couldn't so lovely a creature be reasonable? He was prepared to do a fair amount of philandering and pretending that a spade was not a spade; but to-day his time was short, his need to leave the desert country pressing. He was suddenly in the position of a man who wants a plain answer to a plain question.

It was repellent to the girl to see his agitation. A man of Schaum's type dominates and wins only while he remains cool.

"I don't know how the marriage came about; but I do know that you must care as little for him as he does for you. I wanted to be honest and open to you about the thing. If I could have depended on you—if you'd given me any frank encouragement—I'd have spoken to your uncle while he was here," the artist said bitterly. "He's a man of the world. He'd have understood. I saw more than once that he was unwilling to leave you with the young brute. A marriage such as yours can be broken—brushed away. It's no marriage. What's Heath doing, do you think? You must know well enough. He's trying to force you to break it."

"Hush!"

Cliffe uttered the one word and turned from him, trying to think, to understand. All that had puzzled her in Heath's demeanor suddenly stood up fierily from their past, and linked itself into a burning chain of evidence. Was this the explanation? He desired to be rid of her. Why? She was not aware of having uttered the word aloud, but Schaum answered it.

"The reason's in that hogan by the store," he said hardily. "There's no use mincing matters. You may as well face it. Of course, it seems monstrous, unbelievable to me; but there's more than a little of the savage in Heath. Like to like. He finds you—intolerable."

The last word was uttered so low that its insult was minimized; but the truth of it pierced Cliffe stingingly. Whether or no she believed Schaum's intimation

about the Navaho, it was evident that her own nearness was well-nigh unbearable to her husband. She began to walk away from Schaum with bent head, and he followed. Pup, remembering her recent instructions, striving hard to please, brought her a bit of wood he had picked up in the sand. Mechanically she accepted it; then whirled to face Schaum, and burst out:

"What you say is loathsome! If I—if I go away from here, it will have nothing to do with you. I never want to see your face again. Don't come near me."

At her feet the greyhound crouched, confronting Schaum. Her voice shook with anger, and pain, and dismay. Pup looked from her to the man, growled deep in his throat, and showed his teeth.

The artist brought up short with a little bitter laugh.

"You're done with me, eh?" he demanded. "And my dog hides behind your skirts and growls at his master. You've got a pretty knack of setting your world by the ears, Mrs. Heath Crittenden. Your husband and I hit it off very well before your coming. Of course, a fellow like that could never be much to me; but what he was I've lost. As for the dog——"

He broke off. His hand went like lightning to his hip pocket; and she saw a gun barrel flash in the air as she flung herself down with a cry, protecting Pup's body, restraining him from leaping upon death, while he struggled to get away, and at the man whom he conceived to be menacing her.

Again Schaum laughed.

"If not now, hereafter," he quoted mockingly. "You may put it all over Xavier Schaum and get away with it; but my dog doesn't live to defy me."

Without a word, Cliffe got to her feet and ran, her hand twisted hard in the greyhound's collar, laboriously keeping herself between him and Schaum. She had reached the first rise toward the mesa when the realization rushed over her that Firefly was back at the barn. She turned and looked. Schaum remained in the center of the road where

she had left him, staring after her. He waved his hand, and pointed to the bluffs, calling something she could not understand. When she paid no heed, he made a movement to pursue her. She cried out sharply, and ran on. Glancing around, she saw him throw back his head and laugh, then wheel and walk away without another look.

She could get the *mâre* by sending Seyouma down for it; or perhaps Heath would send it up. Anyhow, she could not face Schaum again; and she doubly dreaded seeing him in Heath's presence.

Cliffe toiled up the last steep rise before the stone steps of the bluff. Her mind was in such a turmoil that she felt no bodily weariness. She noted a number of moving figures on the bluff above. Then a man came down the steps, bent, and finally knelt before a small bush, gathering the green twigs of the *altha* which the women use for basket making. In her preoccupation, she noted, without really understanding it, that his blanket clung to his figure as though he were in ceremonial dress—or, rather, undress—in which case, of course, he would not wish to be accosted or noticed, since he was, no doubt, gathering the twigs for some use in the *kiva*.

In the moment of turning her head, she stepped, unseeing, over a thin streak of meal—sacred meal, sealing the trail. She had mounted one flight of steps and paused upon the ledge, when she heard a rattling of stones, and two tall, black-masked, ceremonial dancers came plunging down the steps. The sable cylinders hid their faces; but there was rage in their movements. Their bodies were painted black, without adornment, and they wore ragged black sheepskins about their loins.

Cliffe had never been afraid of the dancers, yet she drew back from these with a little chill. As they passed her, she glanced over her shoulder, and noted the old crouching man beside the bush, his pile of greenish twigs heaped on a plaque basket. The newcomers went to him, and began to speak in a sort of muttering growl, pointing to her and to the small buckskin meal pouch in his hand. She was too far away now

to discover the sealing line of meal, the mystic barrier, which once it was death to cross.

She fled up the rock; and as she gained the top she saw a horde of uncouth, masked figures streaming down toward the bluff edge like swarming bees. She wondered for a moment if she had stumbled into a *kachina* dressing room, for the dancers often assume their regalia in chance-sheltered crevices of the rocks.

But these were fully attired and decorated. They were shaking their rattles, stamping until the turtle shells under their knees clashed again, cutting the air with long whips, and emitting that thunderous growl she had thought musical when she heard it from the safe vantage ground of the housetop.

There was but one short flight of steps to ascend now. The *kachinas* were gathered on the rocks above this, between Cliffe and the village. They looked inconceivably tall and menacing against the sky.

On the outskirts of the crowd were a half dozen little fellows hanging back; boys, these, whom Cliffe had made much of. One, in his distress, pulled off the mask, that hid his features, and looked anxiously about seeking some succor for the *bohana* lady. But the men leaped, and rattled, and cut the air with their whips, all the time keeping up that jarring, hideous din.

There was a very broad-shouldered man with a bundle of great whips who seemed to be the leader. He capered and made signs. He shook his free hand and pointed down. Cliffe was beginning to be much frightened. It occurred to her that he was warning her back, and that she should return to Heath at the store. She wheeled about to do so; but an outburst of whistling shrieks apprised her that this was not satisfactory. She faced the two black *kachinas* and the ancient with the twigs. He leaped to his feet, with a face of fierce hate, and thrust an old, shaking arm up to hold his blanket curtainwise between her and that which he had gathered and carried. She guessed in that moment that she had chanced on a sa-

cred mystery, and had offended by looking at it.

Once more she faced the stairway. The raving kachina at the head of it was still pointing to the ground, stamping and shaking his rattle. She mounted the steps, and sat down upon the upper one. The group went wild with rage. On closer view, Cliffe saw that the black masks were mostly of the long-snouted sort, such as Hopi youngsters are told belong to the child eaters. Several were made so that the great, piglike mouth, scarlet painted inside, might be opened and shut by a movement of the man's jaws. These clashed at her. Another carried a saw, which he dragged over the rocks, making a clangorous uproar; while all around the whips sang through the air with a whistling threat, and were brought smartly down upon rock or bush.

Cliffe raised despairing eyes to the village, to the roof of home. The streets were strangely deserted. There was no man, woman, or child in any of them. But on her own house, and two which were slightly lower, stood grotesque kachinas, carrying small bells, which they rang, apparently to guide movements in the squares. Every window that she saw was closed and curtained. Not a door was ajar. There seemed to be no prospect of help from any direction.

The tall, black leader raised his whip, whirling it about his head, where it sung most viciously, and brought it down across the edge of Cliffe's skirts. She leaped to her feet, confronting him with rage in her face that sent him back a pace.

A silent figure came down from the village, walking hurriedly, groping with outspread hands. The blind basket maker pushed through the kachinas. The child, who yet carried his mask in one hand, ran to her, and led her straight to Cliffe's side. Weepala caught the white girl by one shoulder, and put one strong old arm about her waist.

She spoke to the kachinas in Hopi. Her utterance was that of the old pueblo woman, half whisper, plaintive; yet the angry rout dropped back a bit to let

them through. As they passed, the yucca whips once more whirled in air, and were brought down on Cliffe's skirts, on the ground behind their hurrying feet, a threat of what might be done.

Without delaying her steps, Weepala reproved them. The small, unmasked kachina clung close, and was not reproved by his fellows. As they mounted the slope toward the pueblo, the groaning roars of the kachinas began to formulate themselves into words.

"Bohana! Bohana!" The hated name tossed on the raging current of the din. Then somebody cried out in good English: "We don't want any bohanas here."

The blind woman hurried Cliffe along; the swarm of kachinas followed with rumbling, snarling, gnashing uproar. They climbed the slope, entered the strangely empty streets, and crossed to Cliffe's own home. Not stopping to ascend the ladder, the blind woman beat on the lower door, crying Tereva's name, listening, anxious-faced. All the windows of this house, too, were curtained. The kachinas were pouring into the square below them. When Cliffe's terror was at its utmost, the door suddenly opened, and, with a push from she knew not whom, she stumbled across its threshold, and fell to her knees.

The room was dark. When she looked around, the blind basket maker was barring the door; and she saw Tereva, with her back to them, sorting corn from a heap by the wall. It was very strange.

No sooner was the door shut than the kachinas outside seemed to go quite mad. They clamored on the boards with their rattles. Apparently they kicked them with moccasined heels. They roared, and gnashed, and growled deep, wordless growls, while the whining swish of their brandished whips made a thin frilling of sinister sound. Again came the bellowed "Bohana!" and with it Hopi words.

Cliffe dropped where she was, expecting any moment that the door would go down, wondering why the men had let them get to the house. The blind

woman stood still, with her hands on the boards, a slight, anxious half smile on her wrinkled face.

"They go away pretty soon," she told the trembling girl encouragingly.

"Tereva—do you think they'll break the door down and come in?" begged Cliffe. "What makes them act this way, and why are you so strange?"

"They wantin' everybody to stay out of the streets," said Tereva briefly. "See—I got curtain to the window? They make a mystery now. I told you not go. I told you when you went to store you better stay there. All the trails is close. You come in over the meal. We used to kill folks for that; but you only got whipped."

"If you knew, why didn't you come and help me when Weepala did?" Cliffe groped.

"Tereva, why are you mad with me?"

"Huh? I didn't want to get whipped," said Tereva. "They wouldn't whip Weepala 'cause she's blind—she couldn't see what they was doing. She can go anywhere when they make a mystery. She thought they wouldn't whip you 'cause you was a bohana; but, you see, they did."

There was an odd exultation in the Indian girl's voice. The hostility she had shown for the last three days was frankly displayed now. It had gone beyond the personal. It was racial. Cliffe was not lacking in physical courage. A line of soldier forbears had given her strong nerves, the coolness and poise of the fighter; but a sick horror overwhelmed her at thought of the hate which lay behind these demon-



"You go down to Hease," Tereva ordered her grandly.

strations. She had belonged all her life to the favored class among her own people—one of the delight makers, whose faults were smiled at, to whom discipline was never meted out. To find herself here, suddenly, a thing loathed, a creature to be whipped from the streets—it was terrible. She bent her head and endured in silence.

A little touch on her shoulder made her look up. Weepala was speaking in Hopi; not to her, but to Tereva. Cliffe had learned so many words that she caught piecemeal at the sense of what was being said. The noise about the door had died away; the kachinas were gone into the great square where the snake kiva entrance was.

"Lo-lo-my, now," the old woman said. "Pretty soon you open the door and take

her out, and she can see the procession and the dance."

Tereva grunted.

"You take her out—or shall I?" the blind woman urged patiently.

"I'll take her," Tereva returned, after a considerable silence.

Weepala opened the door and passed out. Tereva got to her feet.

"Come on," she said rudely.

"I don't want to see it," demurred Cliffe, drawing back. "I never care to see another Hopi dance as long as I live."

Tereva grumbled and shook her shoulders, taking a bracelet from a nail beside the corn heap and slipping it on her arm.

"You go back down to Hease, then?" she inquired, without looking around.

Cliffe's lips pressed hard together. She could not return to Heath.

"No!" She flung the negative like a stone, and, without further explanation, followed the Indian girl, since she was afraid to be left alone.

Other doors of other houses were opening, women and children in their gala attire pouring into the streets. The housetops were filling with their usual lines of spectators. Measured chanting, and the steady beating of a drum, came from somewhere. Cliffe kept as close to Tereva's heels as she could. The other women and children spoke to her in friendly fashion. Paqua, with her baby in her shawl, hurried up, laughing.

"Stand here," the girl mother advised, mounting on a heap of stone fallen from a wall's edge. "We can see good here."

Tereva's face had cleared. She was childishly agog for the beauty of the anticipated spectacle. She had put on the blue-black Hopi robe over a lawn dress Cliffe had given her, its sheer, crumpled folds protruding at the laced openings like the filmy wings of a beetle ill-folded beneath the shard.

The music came nearer. Through a roadway between the houses appeared the head of the procession; it deployed in the square. Cliffe had never seen so many kachinas, nor such a variety. Two and two came the manas—the young

girls—clad in the creamy-white blankets of maidenhood, the black hair in wheels, the faces lightly masked by a curious fringe which covered the eyes. They bore great pyramids of green. The base was, no doubt, a monster plaque basket, on which were arranged the corn and beans that had been grown in the shelter of the underground temples during the past two weeks. Corn shoots two or three feet long, of a delicate tint from being forced in the dark, were massed for the center, and the complete miniature bean vines were wound about, showing tiny tendrils, delicate leaves, and white blossoms. The gay green of this unseasonable vegetation was inexpressibly joyous against the frost-white landscape in the clear dazzle of desert sunlight.

Accompanying the manas were youths who bore on their backs the sacklike basket in which the Hopi harvests his crops of fruit or small vegetables. These, too, were filled with delicate, verdant shoots of corn and beans.

The girls remained bunched, hemmed in by a cordon of youths. Their dancing was of the static sort possible with their burdens of greenery. The boys who ringed them round were brown, lightly painted, barefoot or in moccasins of greenish-blue, and crowned with lily-like flowers. Their hair was not all arranged in the same fashion. Here and there some fellow had a magnificent crop, gleaming like a crow's wing, streaming unconfined from the roots, falling to the slim waist in a shining, shifting curtain, which he flung about him as he danced. The eagerness of the men's appeals, their unconsciousness of anything but the group of manas, proclaimed that here was the comedy of courtship in flower, the festival which is older than St. Valentine's, which must have originated in the veins of every people when race consciousness grew strong enough to appreciate the significance of the turn of the year, the season when Mother Earth yearns toward the quickener, her ancient lover, the sun.

In the middle of the square the manas halted, lifted high their pyramids of

green, fairy gatherings these from celestial fields of kachina land. The youths knelt to them. At one side the chorus struck up strongly, the lifted, shaken brown hands and tense faces showing how the singers were at one with the song. It was the recitative which Cliffe had heard first in the desert, the movement which it seemed to her marched as the mountains on the horizon marched to the eye. But now behind the swifter movement which ensued was the urge of unborn generations, the haste of life itself in the pulse of youth.

"Tarry a little, stay with us a little, O, beautiful ones.

We have been wearying for your face, O, Makers of Delight."

The manas set down their baskets; they knelt beside their suitors. The hundreds of grotesque kachinas in the rabble rout about them circled, and brought themselves into lines. The chorus chanted, the drums boomed, the mats were spread, the gourds arranged, and the notched sticks began to snarl under the bone plectrums. The voices of the chorus reenforced those of the suitors. The manas answered, their thin, flutelike voices whispering on the frosty air. Deep, hungry came the cry of the suitors.

"Stay with us, O, Makers of Delight—Joy Bringers!"

It seemed to Cliffe that she had known all this long ago, in some previous existence. Somewhere, far back in the ages, before there was such an one as she, she had heard the cry of the primitive man to his mate, seen the gracious surrender of the woman. Something in it terrified her more than the whipping kachinas had done. Her teeth rattled together, and her body was wrenched with shuddering rigors. Tereva's eyes were shining, fixed upon the spectacle. Her breath came short.

"Let's go back to the house—I'm so cold," Cliffe begged.

"Go if you want to," Tereva replied without turning her head.

The preoccupation of her tone robbed it somewhat of insolence. One could see that she wished that she were with

the girls there, the arrangement of her dark hair advertising her errand, choosing a mate for herself from among the suitors. If she had not quarreled with the elders of the village, she would have been in the Bean Dance this year.

The procession went through the streets, Cliffe clinging close to the unresponsive Tereva, shuddering and drawing in her breath sharply when a snouted kachina turned his mask her way. At every kiva mouth in the pueblo ceremonies were held, the manas with their greeneries resting, the suitors kneeling before them, the four sides of the kiva being saluted.

Then, as the youths knelt, the chorus would come to that heart-shaking phrase. They would set the air a-shake with it, brown hands lifted, quivering, brown faces eager, intense. Cliffe held down her head and fought a rising hysteria that seemed to answer the cry.

The clans were many in this the mightiest of all the towns of Hopi. The afternoon waned, the sky flamed to sunset; burned its magnificence upon the altars of the west, and died to ashes. A bitter wind searched the streets; only a baleful orange light winked at the horizon. The choruses bayed on, deep-mouthed, tireless under the darkening heavens; the dancers leaped, the priests intoned.

With the coming of the twilight Cliffe's terror, her own personal emotion, somewhat diminished. She had time to note the strange group of dancers. There was a tall kachina habited in a tapestry brought from Spain, perhaps, by the conquistadors three hundred years ago. Beside him leaped a creature with a hog's head wrapped in a priceless bayeta blanket, and carrying a cavalry sword. The priest on the kiva edge supported himself with a spear a Spanish soldier of Coronado might have borne, its diamond-pointed head cutting dark against the lurid horizon. There were blankets of rabbit fur, woven or knitted in the old mode, fabric of the cotton that was grown here since time was, strange masks and jewels that only this greatest of annual festivities brought out.



Cliffe drew back with an involuntary exclamation.

It was late when the last kiva was reached, its ceremonies held, and the maidens distributed the bean vines and corn shoots from their plaques, giving them to favored suitors, who ran through the streets of the pueblo carrying them.

At last Cliffe succeeded in getting her house mate to return with her. But when she had done so, she was in doubt as to whether she might not have been better off without the Indian girl.

Once or twice since the night when she had played the "Suitor's Song," Tereva had fallen into the same curious mood, when she would sit for an hour by the fire, pulling her hair about her face, declining to understand any English. These seizures often cleared away with great suddenness, and left a smiling atmosphere. But to-night the mood seemed to have come to stay, and Tereva refused even to make the fire.

Cliffe finally managed to coax a blaze into being on the hearthstone, though her inexperience was clumsy enough in doing so.

"What's the matter, Tereva?" she begged for the hundredth time as she brought out and offered some food which was wordlessly refused. "Won't you tell me if you're angry with me?"

For answer, the Indian girl rose up from the hearth where she was sitting, stretched an arm above her head, and plucked a U-shaped bit of wood from the ceiling where it had been thrust in behind the rafters along with other small matters. It was the implement used by the Hopi virgin to fashion the coiffure which announces to all that she desires to take a mate.

"Gimme that brush," she ordered Cliffe, pointing to the wall where hung one of the whisk-broom affairs that Hopis use for arranging the hair.

Cliffe looked from the whisk broom to Tereva; and, as she did not obey, the Indian girl hissed sharply through her teeth—a hint for speed.

The broom brush was one that Cliffe had bought in the market. It did not belong to Tereva, except as everything in the house belonged to her, according to her frequently made assertion. Also, on a tidily arranged box dressing table there was a white celluloid set of comb and brush and manicure implements which had been given to the Indian girl by her teacher at Phoenix.

"Don't you want to get your own comb?" Cliffe inquired tolerantly.

"That's mine," Tereva muttered. "This is my house. I wish you'd go away."

She came across and detached the bunch of grass from its nail, went back to her seat on the floor, and began to arrange her hair. Cliffe observed that, with the assistance of the U-shaped

stick and the long string, braided of black hair, which had been shorn from her own head in childhood, the girl was fashioning the squash blossoms. Her fingers moved slowly. She was as unhalting, as eager as the approaching season itself.

"Tereva," said Cliffe, a little breathlessly, "you never did your hair that way before. Do you mean it?"

"Yes," ejaculated the Indian brusquely. "I goin' to get me a mans. I want my house."

"But, listen, Tereva," Cliffe protested. "It'll be just as you said about Paqua. You'll have no chance to do anything but work, work, work from morning till night, taking care of the house and the babies."

"What else I want to do?" inquired Tereva. She spoke slowly. Her fire was of the sullen, smothered order, yet none the less she was fierily in earnest. Her impulse was strong enough to make her speak out. "What's a woman for in this world if she ain't got some childrens?" she demanded. "Pretty soon she gettin' old and ugly. Who take care of her then if she ain't got no mans or childrens what she worked for? You go down to Hease—that's where you b'long. You leave me to my house. It ain't your house. You ain't got no house—but where Hease is."

"Tereva, Tereva, you can make such beautiful music on the violin—what will you do with that?" cried Cliffe.

For answer, the Indian girl strode across the floor, setting her unshod heels down with a thud at every step. She jerked the violin from its peg and whirled it high. Cliffe shrank, thinking that the other would strike her. Then the instrument was dashed to the floor with a shattering crash, its strings whining and snapping; and Tereva set a brown foot on it.

"There," she cried, "that's what I care about the old fiddles. What I want to hear is my man a-singin', and my babies a-cryin'."

She snapped the bow viciously in her fingers, and added it to the little heap of ruin on the floor. Her hazel eyes had a tawny glare.

"Oh," cried Cliffe, "that was wicked! You'll be sorry for that some day."

"You go down to Hease," Tereva ordered her grandly.

"I don't have to go down to the store just because I leave this house." Cliffe tried to humor the girl and get on better terms.

"I say you go to Hease," Tereva repeated doggedly. She stood for a long minute with her back to Cliffe. Then, as the other made no response, she whirled on her suddenly, and burst out: "You tell him that the teams that went to Winslow a-yesterday is a-bringin' in dynamite to blow up the mission—and the school—and—and the store! Tell Hease that!"

Cliffe hurried to the girl, and leaned around so that she could look into her face. It was quite serious, but the sullenness was diminished.

"Is that the truth?" the white girl demanded, a clutch upon the blanketed shoulder and making a futile attempt to shake the solidly squatted Tereva.

"Uh-huh! They didn't tell me. They didn't ask me to be in the Bean Dance. But I hear. I know. And now I say it to you, so you go out of my house, and leave it for me and my mans when I marry. I want you to go quick!"

"Tereva—it's just the mission and the school they're going to blow up, not the store," Cliffe insisted. "They all like him—they like Heath."

"Yes," Tereva agreed laconically, "but they wants what's in the safe, and the things in the store. Besides, Hopis don't like it when Hease has so many Navahos around."

Cliffe caught her bride blanket up from the couch, then let it fall from her fingers with a shudder. She was afraid to wear the white thing. For the first time since her arrival in Oraibi she felt terror of its streets. Also, there was in her now a deep repugnance toward anything Hopi.

She went through the curtains and got her big gray cloak. As she came out, buttoning it, she spoke to Tereva; and she could see that the girl's face in the shine from the fire was like that of

a naughty child who tries still to pout after having been conciliated. It was near midnight, and the village, worn out with the three days' ceremonies of the Bean Dance and to-night's rituals in the kivas, slumbered about them.

"Tereva, I'll have to go right down now, and I'm afraid," Cliffe said, winding a big gray veil about her head.

She hoped that the Indian girl would offer to go with her; but Tereva merely grunted.

"Ain't nothin' to be scared of," she opined briefly.

Cliffe opened the door and stumbled upon something yielding and elastic that lay there. At first, choking with terror, she thought it was the body of a man. She stooped, shrinkingly, to gaze; then abruptly, with a loud sob, she flung herself down beside poor Pup.

"Oh, Tereva—Tereva!" she cried. "Bring a light. Somebody's killed my dog."

The Indian girl, shaken finally out of her black humor, came, lamp in hand, to see where the greyhound lay, a bullet hole in the center of his forehead. A great shudder took Cliffe at thought of the hate that had climbed the ladder to her doorstep with such a burden.

CHAPTER XIII.

Out of the yellow lamp shine of her own home, Cliffe emerged into the liquid blue moonlight where old Oraibi crouched, ruinous, ancient, her walls crumbling, a town under the sea.

She had felt herself, until now, a citizen. The silent Indian dogs that never barked, but only howled on white nights, were friendly enough to her. But with Tereva's words, with the stumbling over that bundle of death at her doorstep, there had come a distrust of all the world. A moment she hesitated at the foot of her own ladder, then pulled her cloak about her, and set forth.

Her cheeks were still wet, and every now and then a tear slipped down them, while her breath caught in her throat. Poor, harmless Pup lay in the lower room where Tereva had dragged him.

"I won't have his body eaten by the curs as other dead dogs are here," Cliffe had protested fiercely. "You've got to help me bury him to-morrow, if we can't get somebody else to do it."

"Seyouma'll bury him," Tereva agreed, with much of her old-time placidity. Now that Cliffe was going, now that she had her way, she seemed appeased—more like her earlier self.

It would leave a great vacancy in Cliffe's days to have no graceful arabesque of abject adoration waiting at her threshold; no pointed, cold muzzle thrust into her hand as she stepped forth; no creature to make curlicues of himself for her delectation on the rocky horizon when she chose to stroll abroad. She would never see him flitting on before her, nor meet his watchful eye, the head pressed hard down on the front paws, the tremulous tail released from its captivity and waving a welcome as she came up. It was midnight. If he had been with her to-night his voice must have roused some one in the village. As it was, she got to the bluff's edge without challenge, and halted a moment at the head of the stone stairs to get her breath.

It was a waning moon up in heaven, the desert a sea of night; and she dived off the bluff into its bosom, getting down the twisty stairs more by feeling than by sight, having the sensation of one who descends into the unknown, the ambiguous.

She reached the stairs' foot safely, though every turn held, for her apprehensive imagination, a lurking Indian. The steeper slope below was negotiated, and she was in the road, walking in the middle of it, for terror of the bushes on each side, starting, trembling, seeing a crouching figure leap up from behind a boulder, coming closer to find it only the shadow of another rock. Sometimes afraid of what was behind her, she ran; sometimes, in dread of what was ahead, she lagged; but always, eventually, she pushed on.

Finally there was the opening of the arroyo. When she had passed it, with visions of a horde bursting out upon her from its shelter, and found herself on

the more level going, she began to breathe freer.

She ran ahead, meeting strange, warm airs from the heated sands that held the ultimate, chill pathos of melting snow. The dispensary and the field matron's cottages had shown no light. The school buildings were black and silent. The few Hopi huts between her and the store lay fast asleep. A dog in front of one of the doors rose and snarled at her as she fled past. The old hound at the store got up and came forward silently to meet her, sniffed about her skirts, and went back to his place. When her journey was nearly done, she remembered with dismay that she had parted from Schaum near the store.

She was almost as much afraid of meeting him as of one of the Indians. Approaching the buildings, this aversion deepened—yet the store was the one place for her to go. Heath must hear her news. She came up to it, trembling, to perceive thankfully a dim square of illumination where Heath toiled late over his textbooks.

She hesitated, recollection of her interview with Schaum holding her even out there, defenseless, in the dark. She would see if he were with her husband before she went in. She stole toward the window, and looked.

There sat Heath, just as she had pictured him, before the table, book-strewn and littered with papers and pencils. He was absorbed in study, his lips moving now and then as he worked. The yellow light of the lamp caught the strong beauty of his face; it burnished the locks pushed impatiently back from his forehead, and threw a shadow, gigantic, grotesque, on the wall beyond. A futile emotion that she could not classify took her by the throat at sight of him thus. In that moment she told herself that she would, had he permitted, have been his best friend. It seemed terrible to be shut out from him, to see him making his fight alone.

Had she but known it, there is little hardship for such as Heath in loneliness which they choose. They are used to fighting single-handed; they are not so apt to receive as to give. When one

of this sort is convicted of an inability to bestow, it is then that he is wounded most.

As she stood uncertain, grasping the window sill, a figure entered the room with a wonted step, went to the hearth, and knelt, busy over something that sat there. It was the Navaho woman. Cliffe drew back with an involuntary exclamation. Heath, absorbed in his books, did not hear; but the quick ear of the Indian took note. She turned, spoke to Crittenden in a low tone, and pointed.

Cliffe, horribly ashamed to be caught spying in at his window, ran quickly to the side door, and was there when he threw it open.

"Heath," she broke out as he stepped back, amazed, for her to enter, "I've come to tell you—we'd better be alone for what I've got to say."

She looked around. The Indian woman's lips widened in that flashing, intolerable smile which Cliffe had learned to hate. She went to the hearth, and, pointing with the toe of her moccasin at the carefully covered pans, said slowly, negligently, in her odd, clipped English:

"You watch the bread, then, white woman. Men got to have bread, and I set my risin' too late."

She stalked out of the room, unaware that Cliffe's superintendence of the rising would be less useful than Heath's own. To her a woman was assuredly a breadmaker, whether she was anything else or no. She was not familiar with a class exclusively destined for makers of delight—joy bringers.

They were alone together. A pulse beat painfully, chokingly in Cliffe's throat. She held hard to the edges of the littered, book-strewn table between them. She noted the mounting red in her husband's face, and was unable to guess whether it was shame for his occupation, resentment that she should see it, or anger at her intrusion. She was used to his resenting her incursions upon his life.

"What do you want?" he asked her uncompromisingly.

It was no time to quarrel over nuances of manner.

"Tereva's just told me that the Indian teams that went over to Winslow three days ago were to bring back dynamite. They're going to blow up the mission and the school—and this store."

She gave her news succinctly. In the importance of it, Heath apparently passed over more personal considerations. He pondered it a while, forgetting her, coming back to a better acceptance of her when he remembered her again.

"It doesn't look so very unlikely," was his conclusion. "I knew there was something queer about that bunch that went out. They wouldn't take a pound of freight for me, though I'd made a bargain fast and tight, and I finally did what I seldom do, and offered them an extra price. It looks as though they didn't want me to send out goods. By George, it does!"

Plainly he was concerned, interested, but in no way dismayed. Cliffe's perturbation rolled from her in a tide. Here was refuge. Here was a strong arm. She dropped into a chair and began to tremble.

"They refused Schaum's freight, too," Heath said, moving to the fire and mechanically pushing back a brand which had fallen close to the covered bread pans. "I'm sorry he's already got away. You could have gone out with him. You'll want to leave, won't you? I'd send you even if there's only enough danger in it to make you uneasy."

"Send me?" echoed Cliffe uncertainly. And then in a more assured tone: "When did Mr. Schaum go?"

"Right after supper. He wouldn't be far enough away but what a runner could catch him," Heath debated; "only he's going in the wrong direction. He intends to camp a while in Cañon Du Chelly before he goes out."

Cliffe wondered at him. For the life of her, she could not determine then, nor in the talk which followed, whether he was so indifferent to that which concerned her that he did not see Schaum's pretensions, or whether, seeing them, he cared not at all.

"What shall I do until we can leave?" she asked him at last helplessly.

And the answer came:

"Go back on the mesa. I'll take you up there myself. You'll be safe among the Hopi women—you understand that, don't you?"

"I don't know," faltered the girl. "I didn't think I was a coward; but I can't feel safe anywhere—except where you are."

"According to Tereva, it's rather particularly me they're after," Heath returned briefly, ignoring any personal meaning her speech might have had. "I suppose we ought to warn the people at the school, and at the mission," he added, after some cogitation. "There may be nothing in it; but we white folks must always hang together."

"Firefly's at the school barn," Cliffe said. "I could speak to the teachers when I go there for the mare, and then I shouldn't mind riding out to the mission—in daylight."

"It'll be Sunday morning—it is Sunday morning," said Heath, looking through the window to where the east was beginning to show a pallid line of white. "You'd better have some breakfast here. About nine o'clock the missionaries will all be over to hold Sunday school. They could be told then. Come to the fire—you're cold."

She approached the blaze, which had died down during their lengthy talk. The bread had cooled overmuch; and Heath mechanically turned the pans when he mended the blaze. Utterly worn out and exhausted, Cliffe dozed in her chair. The Navaho woman entered, and without a word set the table for two. The girl by the fire was come to that point where all strange things seemed reasonable, and only the little commonplace and natural happenings a curious unreality. Heath went and attended to something outside, then came back to walk up and down the apartment. Despite her weariness, she turned her head a bit so that she could watch him from under her lashes.

"Have you thought about where you want to go?" he asked when he saw she was awake.



She waited a while in the shadow, glancing over to where Heath's window was lighted, taking, Heaven knows what, farewell of this portion of her life.

"No," said Cliffe, "I haven't got as far as that. Your mother and Uncle Horace will have sailed before this."

"What about Mrs. Boaler?"

"I believe I'd rather not be there," returned Cliffe slowly. "Do you think you'd like it?"

"Oh, it isn't what I'd like that's to be considered," returned Heath, as one who makes a plain statement. "What you like and what I like are very different things."

The Navaho brought in coffee and hot food. Through the eastern window they could see the awful roses of dawn abloom as they sat down to this strange first meal alone together.

"I expect you'll have to ride out, and ride Firefly," said Heath, filling her cup. "I haven't bought horses, as I intended to; and, of course, if there's anything in this, they won't let me have Indian teams."

Cliffe's face whitened. She set the cup down quickly.

"Aren't you going with me?" she demanded. "Tereva said they intended to blow up the store."

He raised his head and looked at her. There was something humorous in his regard.

"And you think I ought to leave it

for them to blow up, do you? It's all I have in the world—my share in this store here. There's the stock of goods, and more gems in the safe than I wish there were—garnets, turquoises, and peridots. I've just got in an extra lot of money for wool buying, too."

"Yes, yes—they know that," Cliffe interrupted impatiently. "That's why they chose this time to loot the store. The Kiva masters want the mission and school blown up because they hate the government; but the younger men are thinking of what they'll get here."

"You see," Heath put it, "I'll have to stay."

"You'll have to stay—for a little miserable money!"

"But it isn't all mine," explained Heath patiently. "I've got the interests of my partners to safeguard."

"Oh—that! Dave and Bart are rich. They'd never miss what was lost here."

Heath looked her over consideringly. A man must always wonder at a woman's sense of honor—or her lack of it.

"No," he agreed, "they'd never miss the money."

"And you know they'd want you to save yourself," Cliffe pressed feverishly, putting the greater strength into this

plea that she felt herself debarred from urging one more personal.

"Think so?" inquired Heath.

"I know it," Cliffe declared.

Her husband shook his head.

"You don't understand these things," he said gently. "I didn't make a partnership agreement with these two men on the understanding that I was to stick by the proposition while everything was lovely, and quit on them when danger came. Dave and Bart are good fellows; but they wouldn't want a partner like that. I shouldn't want him. In fact, if I got to be that kind of man—if anything made it of me—I don't know whether I could live with myself or not."

He forbore to suggest anything which might thus bend his views. He seemed to be afraid of wounding her, of claiming superiority for his own opinions. He made no hint of condemning or calling into question her ethics.

"A man must take care of himself," she maintained stubbornly.

"A man must take care of what he's promised to take care of," Heath countered. "I didn't have to say to the Ballards in so many words that I'd stay with the position whatever came. They knew it, or they wouldn't have trusted me at all. You expect that much of any decent white man."

"To take care of what he has promised to take care of," Cliffe repeated. Those wonderful dark eyes of hers began to glow somberly. They searched her husband's face. "Does that include your wife?" she whispered.

Heath had risen, and was turning away when she spoke. He whirled as though stung, facing her once more.

"My wife!" he echoed bitterly. It was the first time she had ever given herself that name, yet his voice in repeating it was neither raised nor menacing, though to her it was terrible. "Are you my wife?"

He made the query with a sort of plain directness that robbed it of sarcasm. He studied her averted countenance a moment, and then concluded bleakly:

"Oh, no! You're a woman I married—God forgive me!—against her will—she says—but who clings to her bargain. I have no wife."

Cliffe sat motionless in her chair while her husband left the room. Within her, something too great for rage clamored for expression. After a time he came back, got a paper from his table drawer, and again withdrew—but without looking at her. He had no appearance of intending to quarrel, of desiring to humiliate her. He had merely dropped her out of his world, which seemed to be the only defense he knew. The red woman came in, cleared away the breakfast things, grumbled about her bread, and went out again.

Cliffe's fury began to come down to the normal where she could feel it. In the glow of its surge, she could have killed them—either—both—or herself. Her whole body went hot and cold as it swelled and ebbd. One thing was sure. She must get away from this place, and get away quickly. If she could help herself, she would never see or speak to Heath Crittenden again. The house was silent as she stepped from the side door and fronted the desert.

She went across to the school, and warned the solitary assistant teacher who was in charge of matters while the principal and his family spent Sunday at Second Mesa. It seemed strange to see this fragile woman accept the tale of life and death with such composure. From the school she rode over to the Mennonite mission—she had not been there since the marriage of Annie and the major took place within its walls. These quiet, hard-living Germans also took her news with a stoicism which daunted her. Only the younger brother of the wife seemed terrified; and with him Cliffe arranged to ride out, going horseback, after night, over to the railway.

She hurried back to the pueblo, avoiding the store, and found that Tereva had already carried her bowl of meal to the doorstep of the woman whose son she desired to marry. The meal was taken in, which meant that the Hopi girl's proposal was accepted. Cliffe observed

bitterly how everything and everybody conspired to leave her no place in Oraibi—to push her out.

She packed two trunks and a bundle; one of the boxes containing her own clothing, the other the baskets and embroideries which had adorned her room, and which she felt belonged to Heath. The bundle held Schaum's sketches. Cards were attached to each. The key of Heath's trunk she meant to mail him; and she asked Tereva to see that he sent her clothing after her, and that Schaum got his bundle of pictures.

It was nightfall when she had finished. She rode down to the foot of the mesa, waited a while in the shadow, glancing over to where Heath's window was lighted, taking, Heaven knows what, farewell of this portion of her life; wondering still if all would not be well should she ride across and knock at her husband's door.

Then the German boy from the mission rode quietly out of the shadows and joined her. Almost without a word they moved away together, the young fellow keeping a slight lead which indicated the direction. Cliffe divined, in his strained silence, an agonized terror which can belong only to youth, an emotion which had a nightmare element in it.

"It's about sixty-five miles to the cañon," he said to her huskily when they were well out of Oraibi; "a little less if we go by Leupp and get the railroad at Sunshine. Either way, my pony can make it before day—do you think yours can?"

Cliffe answered in the affirmative. The winter nights were long. Firefly had become acclimated and used to the elevation.

"I ain't so sure of the trail, but I can strike a course by the stars," the boy

went on feverishly. "My brother told me. I guess we won't make any mistake. We've got the river to cross—but not in a bad place. We could go by the mission Leupp if you wanted to."

"I'd rather not," said Cliffe.

And thereafter they rode in silence.

The early night was black, moonless, but with a vast sprinkling of white desert stars overhead. These furnished light which was no light, so that it was like being able to see in darkness. Cliffe wondered that in such obscurity she should get continually the sense of space. It was not, indeed, the world that seemed about her, but a cosmic spaciousness, as though the darkness extended to other worlds. She checked Karl when he would have urged his horse, advising him that they must begin slowly and make no speed until at least their mounts were well warmed to the work.

"Yes—sure—I know it. You're right. I just want to get away from any folks that might be hanging around Oraibi," he apologized. "I ain't afraid when we get clean away from them."

As they passed over mile after mile in that silence and darkness, Cliffe began to feel a certain calm descending upon the turmoil of her mind. If it were to do and say now, how differently she would speak to Heath. Almost she could have turned back for that interview, and allowed him to send her out as he had planned to do, to send her after a last word—a word of more human kindness. But the fleeing, terrified boy at her side—what should she say to him? No, let it go as it had started; let it lie at last as it fell. Her affairs were small matters in the great world. Indeed, turning back and speaking to Heath might not make any change in them.

TO BE CONCLUDED.





The Quality of Brotherhood

By Edward Boltwood

Author of "The Umbrella," "Whoso Diggeth a Pit," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

IT had been a noon wedding, and now, at five o'clock, Mrs. Tallon, an elderly cousin of the Cheens, was on their narrow piazza, ready to be conveyed to the railroad station. Because William and Malcolm Cheen were bachelors they had asked her to act as the feminine head of the household at the marriage of their only sister; and Mrs. Tallon, apparently loath to relinquish this importance, hesitated to descend the steps to the waiting carriage.

"Remember, Malcolm, that I'm perfectly willing to stay a while, if you poor men are afraid of feeling lonesome," she said.

"Oh, we'll be all right!" answered the younger of the brothers with a smile.

Mrs. Tallon directed a tentative glance at William; but he did not respond, being solemnly engaged in kicking grains of rice out of the vestibule.

"Well, it went off splendidly, if I do say so," she continued. "I never saw a girl as sweet as Jenny was in your mother's wedding dress. I packed it in the green trunk, Malcolm; the one that is to be expressed to Boston. I guess I've attended to everything. The caterer's folks have gone, and Bridget is clearing up the kitchen."

"Yes, we'll be all right," repeated Malcolm, while he accompanied her

down the steps. "We can't thank you enough, Cousin Kate. Good-by."

"Good-by, then, Malcolm."

From the vestibule, William waved his awkward hand as the cab rattled away on the street of the small New England city. He was an awkward and ponderous man of nearly fifty, looking even older in the antiquated frock coat which he called his "Prince Albert." When the carriage had disappeared, he turned silently and went indoors, limping a trifle under the pressure of his Sunday shoes.

Malcolm Cheen, slender, sharply featured, and younger by a dozen years than his brother, leaned against a sagging pillar of the piazza. The house, built by their grandfather, was somewhat out of repair. Its proper upkeep had been a great burden on the earnings of Malcolm's modest law practice, and on William's salary as clerk in the Yay-boro Bank, and on Jenny's dwindling income; but they had made as brave a pretense as possible until Jenny had been married. Malcolm Cheen, leaning against the piazza pillar, did an odd thing. He snapped his fingers at the wintry sky, and laughed.

In the parlor he found William, trying to light a gas jet of the old-fashioned chandelier.

"Here, let me," suggested Malcolm.

And then he seemed to check himself, as if the trivial offer were somehow inappropriate.

"I've got it," said William.

The gas whistled and flared, and by its dim illumination they looked at one another for a moment—the moment which each, in his own fashion, had been picturing so long; the moment when they should be left to the solitude of the house on Jenny's wedding day. William shifted his dull gaze to a corner of the room.

"Bridget must have supper 'most on," he said suddenly. "Where's the evening paper? Is that newsboy late again?"

"I don't know," answered Malcolm, shrugging his shoulders.

"We'll just wheel in those easy-chairs," resumed William. "The sofa and the table are in the back entry, aren't they? Why, we can fix the place in less'n two shakes, so's no one could ever tell that—that anything has happened." His voice faltered. "Can't we, Malcolm?" he added wistfully.

"No," said Malcolm.

A queer tightness of throat angered Malcolm, and he was wrathfully conscious of a juvenile wish to postpone the interview. Abruptly he reflected that it would be easier for him if he had the excuse of some active and present grievance against his brother, as he used to have constantly in the shameful past.

"We can't fix the place, William," he proceeded; "and it wouldn't make any



"Well, it went off splendidly, if I do say so," she continued.

difference to me if we could. I'm going to leave it. I'm going to leave Yay-boro."

"You're going to—to——"

"To quit Yayboro for good, I tell you. To live my own life, unburdened. To give myself a chance at last. My plans are made. I could go to-morrow."

William halted, motionless, with his fingers pressed into the padded back of the chair which he had been wheeling forward.

"Did Jenny know?" he murmured.

Malcolm, somewhat surprised, shook his head. It was not the question which he expected.

"I'm glad she didn't," said William thickly. "It might have kind of spoiled things for her, to think you—we were going to split up. She might have blamed it to her marriage. I guess you thought of that, Malcolm."

"Come, come!" irritably rejoined the other. "We won't be sentimental about it; although the truth is that if Jenny were here, I'd stay, too. For her sake, I'd do my share, as I've always done, to make a home for us, and to—to——"

He paused, biting his lip. William timidly raised his eyes.

"And to stand by me and keep me straight? Is that it, Mallie?"

"I didn't say so."

"Yes, but"—William dropped his glance once more—"but that's all right now. I've not touched drink in six years, nor wanted to. I'm safe. Mallie, you're sure that's so, aren't you? It isn't because you're afraid I'll shame you again, is it, that you are going?"

"Oh, my heavens, can't you understand the reason?" burst out Malcolm. "I've never been young. Since father and mother died, I've been cramped and fettered. Now I want freedom. I need my own life for my own ambitions, free and unbound. I have a right to them. They are high and worthy, and they are mine. As for this town, I hate it, and this wretched house, and all that it reminds me of!"

As if the house at that instant desired to assert itself, the ancient doorbell clanged dolefully. William walked

slowly to answer it; but Malcolm hurried upstairs to his bedroom. Without thinking, he pulled a portmanteau from the closet. Then he smiled. Of course, he could not very well take his departure that night. He sat down on the bed and idly tested the fastenings of the valise.

After a minute or so William's low voice called him from the stair landing. There was something in the tone of it which brought him, immediately and mechanically, to his feet.

"Mallie?"

"Yes, Bill—right here."

"I've got to go downtown."

"Downtown at supper time? What for? Whereabouts?"

"To the bank."

Malcolm was not sorry to be left alone. Collecting his thoughts, he paced the upper hall, and reviewed in his mind the arrangements he had made to enter a Chicago law firm. His plans engrossed him. Suddenly he looked up, and found himself standing on the threshold of the dismantled room, once so dainty, which had been his sister's.

The blue shaft of a street light darted through a window of the bedchamber and revealed its desolation—the stripped walls, the naked bookcase, the despoiled dressing table, and the two locked trunks in the middle of the untidy floor. But it was not so much at these that Malcolm stared as at a box of mottled pasteboard which lay on the bare mattress of the little bed.

Malcolm knew well enough what the box contained. When Jenny was a schoolgirl, she had privately, out of her meager pocket money, bought a cheap set of wood-carving tools for William. In the days of William's long fight against the devil of drink, she had noticed Malcolm's laborious attempts to interest the elder brother peacefully at home with books, chess, cards, even with word puzzles and dissected pictures. She knew, then, only that William had periods of being "sick," when he needed amusement, and she had made her childishly futile contribution for his relief.

With a hot, curt oath, Malcolm

ground his heel into the threshold. His recollection was of something monstrous and revolting, which had tarnished the youth of Jenny and himself. He remembered their long vigils, their squalid tasks, the constant fear of exposure, and of the dishonor of their father's name.

But, as he descended the stairs, Malcolm's spirits in some degree returned. The faint perfume of the wedding flowers still lingered in the lower rooms. Jenny's life, from now on, would assuredly be happy. Her husband, a prosperous merchant, would see to that. Malcolm hummed a tune, searched the parlor mantel for his cigarette case, and was reminded that he had left it that morning in his office.

Main Street was nearly deserted. Malcolm had his office opposite the Yay-boro Bank; and, after he had found his cigarette case in his desk, he glanced reminiscently across the street. His father had been president of the bank. There was a light in the directors' room, and the shadows of men, moving about irregularly, were visible.

The ponderous street portal of the bank opened and closed, and William's figure appeared on the steps. He looked hesitantly up and down, and then set off at a strange, shuffling gait to the next corner, where the electric sign of a drinking saloon glowed imperiously; and he halted in front of the wicker doors, which seemed to yearn for him like the jaws of a gleeful mammoth.



William's low voice called him from the stair landing.

Malcolm savagely crumpled a cigarette in his fingers so that the tobacco trickled to the floor. He oscillated between anger and a vague satisfaction that the present grievance, which he had craved, might be forthcoming. But before he could decide upon his real attitude of mind, William, without entering the saloon, had turned toward the Cheen house. Malcolm descended to the sidewalk.

Another man emerged at that moment from the bank building. The man was Max Nagel, a member of the board of directors. Nagel caught sight of Malcolm, and crossed the street, with a blank look on his fat, kindly face.

"Have you seen William?" said Max.

"Yes," replied Cheen.

"Then I suppose he told you his—his trouble," Nagel grunted.

"Not all of it," parried Malcolm.

Quick fear seized him. No more serious scandal than the pity of their friends had ever touched the Cheens. Nagel ducked his head, as if to avoid something.

"It was tough to have it come out to-day," resumed Max. "Your sister's wedding day. But it couldn't be helped. Typical, country-bank business. Just a little while longer, and not a soul would ever have known. William was making it good every month, dollar by dollar."

Malcolm's throat seemed to burn and contract.

"When did it first happen?" he blurted painfully. "I didn't quite understand—I—" His voice was choked into silence.

"Only once—darned near three years ago," said Nagel. "Not a cent since then. Oh, William made a clean breast of it! And I don't presume old Waring and the cashier are going to be too hard with him." Max eyed reflectively the yellow windows of the directors' room. "It's sort of a horse on them, after all," he continued, and suddenly grasped Cheen's elbow. "If you want any help, you holler."

"Why should I want any help?" demanded Malcolm, with sullen emphasis. "It's none of my funeral."

But Nagel was already walking rapidly away.

The front door of the Cheen house closed with an indecisive rattle, and Malcolm went down the dark hall to the dining room. William stood beside the table.

"We're both pretty late," he said. "Bridget just left a snack. It's her night out—Thursdays."

The younger brother blinked at him in grim wonder. There was no trace in William's manner of the occurrence which Nagel had revealed to Malcolm a few minutes ago.

"I didn't feel like eating much," added William.

"I don't feel like eating anything," Malcolm said.

"Well, let's smoke," proposed William. "I guess I can find my pipe. See here, Mallie. I've kind o' fixed up our den the way it used to be before the—before we had company."

And he sat down in their cozy smoking room and filled the bowl of his veteran meerschaum.

Malcolm moved about uneasily, pretending to straighten the pillows of the divan. He was aware that his hands trembled, and that his temples throbbed, and that, so far as appearance went, the situation of himself and William might have been reversed.

"I hope you don't feel very bad," said William, through a placid cloud of smoke. "We've had sort of a tough day, haven't we? But there—we've weathered plenty of tough days, Mallie. Sit down, won't you? Do you want to talk about Jenny, or your own plans, or what?"

The younger man shook his head and flushed angrily.

"Maybe you'd like a game of chess," William persisted, rummaging in the table drawer. "We haven't played chess for a long while, and—no? What's the matter, Mallie? You mustn't feel bad just because of the news you told me about your leaving Yayboro."

"It isn't that."

"What, then? Our losing Jenny?"

Malcolm did not wish to reply. He had, instead, an hysterical desire to roar with delirious laughter when he saw William proffer the board and chessmen. He recalled how often he had tried with them to soothe his brother's drink-fevered brain—and now William, a detected embezzler, would treat him similarly!

"Well, here's a couple of packs of cards," William observed. "How did that old solitaire game go that we used to tackle when Jenny had the operation and we were so worried about her? I haven't played it since. Have you?"

"No," muttered Malcolm.

"That was three years ago," said William.



R. Emmett Owen
2

"I guess you've atoned, old man."

The simple phrase echoed in Malcolm's ears like the reverberation of a distant bell. He drew back, staring down at William, who was intently arranging the rows of cards on the table with careful accuracy. Three years ago! That was the time, according to Nagel, when William had taken the money from the bank.

"How'll we ever get out an ace of spades, Mallie?"

Malcolm blindly indicated a move. His thoughts were elsewhere. Three years ago—the black period of Jenny's desperate illness, when her proposed hospital expense, with the fee of the great surgeon, had seemed so impossible

for them to pay! He remembered that William had insisted that they must prepare to pay it; that the best skill in the land was none too good for Jenny.

"I guess that move of yours with the ten-spot was a mistake," said William, bending over the cards. "We've blocked both club suits, haven't we?"

Malcolm pulled forward a chair, and the older brother looked up eagerly.

"That's better, Mallie," he declared. "Here's a cigar—the kind you like. Now let's see about those clubs."

He ruffled the corners of the pack and turned another card; but Malcolm's half-closed eyes were riveted upon the darkness of the adjoining room, the

room where Jenny had been married in their mother's wedding dress.

A quaint fancy mastered him. It seemed as if the dark room beyond the door became dimly luminous, and as if he discerned in it his father, and his mother, and their children, a shadowy group of phantoms, a dream picture of household love. But Malcolm's brows contracted sharply. Nowhere in the mystical picture could he discern the figure of himself.

William dropped some cards on the floor, and stooped to recover them.

"I'll light up the rest of the house a little," said Malcolm. "The place is full of ghosts."

"Ghosts?" laughed William, with an effort which was pathetically evident. "You shan't see any ghosts, Mallie, if I can help it, to-night of all nights. Why, this may be almost the last——"

"Possibly," faltered Malcolm.

He went into the gloomy parlor. There were no ghosts visible to him now; but, nevertheless, he was haunted. He gazed around at the darkness as if he had lost something. Malcolm knew what it was. It was love—brotherly love. Since boyhood he had not loved his brother. But poor, weak, stumbling, dependent William had kept, at least,

that boyhood treasure. William, even now, in his hour of shame, loved Malcolm too well to cloud, with the revelation of his own disgrace, their last night together in the old house.

Malcolm, loitering thoughtfully in a recess of the parlor, glanced downward. At his feet lay a small white web of silken thread. He picked it up, and his eyes moistened. He pressed to his lips his mother's bridal glove. Ghosts? No. The house was full of realities—real forgiveness, hope, charity, affection.

A stifled groan startled him. He looked back into the smoking room. The cards were still upon the floor. William had fallen across the table, sobbing, his face hidden in his arms.

"I know, Bill. Nagel told me. It will be all cleared. I'll see the cashier and Waring in the morning. For father's sake, and ours, it will be all cleared."

"Cleared, Mallie? And me a criminal?"

Malcolm's resolute, dependable hand touched the heaving shoulder, and remained there.

"I guess you've atoned, old man."

"Mallie!"

"Yes, Bill, right here. I'm going to stay—always—right here."



The Ghosts of Years

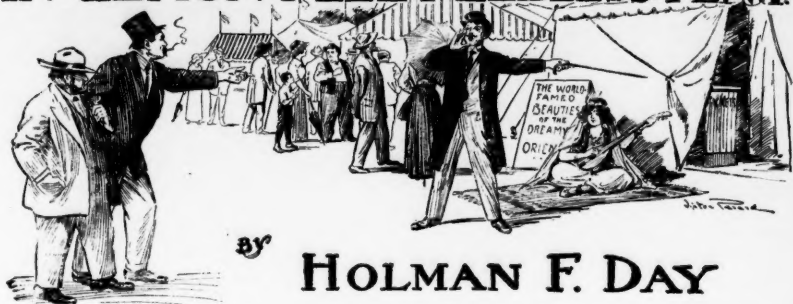
LAST night, in dreams, when the lights were low,
Across the mountains, 'cross the seas,
In a quiet, old, familiar room,
I sat in my own old chair, at ease.

And, ah, so sweet in the embers' glow
The peace, the deep content I knew;
And the one I love most raised the latch,
And soft, toward the fire, his armchair drew.

The ghosts of years, of the silent years,
In curls of smoke we watched them go,
As he laid his dear, strong hand on mine—
Last night, in dreams, when the lights were low.

FLORENCE CALNON.

IN LEMON-PEEL PEEBLESS TENT



by

HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

AS a man who boasted that he never did anything by halves, Hiram Look decided that he would celebrate properly his reconciliation with Cap'n Aaron Sproul, and would incidentally exhibit proof of that reconciliation to the public at large. So he came around to the cap'n's house, wearing a new plug hat, and driving a span of horses, and insisted on Cap'n Sproul making a day of it at the midsummer meet of the Cuxabexis Gents' Driving Association.

The cap'n hesitated a moment—and then went along. To be sure, he might have accepted such an invitation with a bit more enthusiasm, and he would have done well to suppress his acrid comments on "hoss jockeys," but Hiram was too full of the joy of the day to take offense.

"There's plenty of other things besides hoss jockeys on the bill this trip," he assured his friend. "They've taken my advice, and are going to ginger the thing up, Aaron. There's going to be more to it than a lot of old pelters skating around through the dust. They needed a little whoop-la to coax the boys out, and you'll see a midway that'll have to be perused through smoked glass if your eyes are anyways tender. I have put the trustees next to the right kind of attractions—and after thirty years in the show business I ought to know what will attract."

Five trips down the midway aforesaid did not exhaust Hiram's enthusiasm.

"I told 'em they needed ginger—they've got it," he declared.

He beat with the flat of his hand upon the cap'n's wincing shoulder. He pointed out this attraction and that. He dragged his friend in front of banners; he pushed him away to view other banners.

It was a clamorous midway. A blatant and bawling midway. Barkers howled hoarsely; there were constant rataplan of drums and shriek of musical instruments, and crowds pressed and thrust and eddied.

When Hiram whirled on his heel and started on his sixth trip of inspection, Cap'n Sproul balked.

"I've got just five times too much of that thing already," he stated grimly.

"Why, we have only just started in viewing the outside!"

"I'll take the rest of my dose after I'm sentenced to Tophet. Hell ain't any worse than this, except that it's a little hotter."

"Well, I must say that I'm proud of your sporting blood," declared Hiram, with disgust. "What's your idea of a fair, anyway—a matched game of crochet, and an exhibition of worsted work?"

"I ain't any expert on shows, the same as you are, and I don't hanker for the

reputation of being one. I simply know when I've got enough of a thing. Fighting back and forth through that mob, having them howlers spit forth at me, and bang drums in my ears ain't my idea of a rollicking time, and I'm bold to say so."

Hiram surveyed his friend with blistering contempt.

"I'll go get a pine chip for you, and you can go over behind the hoss barns and whittle duffickers for the what-not," he suggested. "Or is it knitting work that sailors take the most interest in?"

The cap'n returned Hiram's gaze with malevolence.

"I've stated to you a good many times," he said, "that when you get one of these circus fits onto you, then you ain't a responsible human being. There ain't any sense of decency left in you when you're having one of them spells. I ought to have known more than to come down here with you."

Hiram started to retort; but he hesitated, and gulped the words back.

"There's no good in us scrapping, Aaron. There isn't anything to scrap about. It's too pleasant an occasion for you and me to start anything between us. You see how fair I am in the matter. I invited you because I thought there'd be a good show—as I understand shows—and I hoped you'd have a pleasant time of it. I'm sorry if you ain't suited. There! I've said the square word to you, and said it first."

Cap'n Sproul's acerbity melted promptly.

"You'll have to overlook what I said, Hiram. But, having been a sailorman most of my life, and being used to peace and stillness, a hullabaloo like this affects me like a windstorm drives a cat crazy. I can't help it, and I'm sorry it's so. I've ripped out, and now I feel better. I'll go ahead and punish myself for talking as I did. Heave ahead! I'll follow you."

"I can't say as I exactly relish that last statement about your going along because you want to punish yourself; but we'll let it drop where it is. I'll have you interested in this midway be-

fore I get done with you. Now, come along!"

The most congested press of that day was in front of a tent whose gaudy banners proclaimed "The World-famed Beauties of the Dreamy Orient." Hiram used elbows and shoulders, and made a lane through the gaping men, and the cap'n followed sullenly at his guide's heels. Cap'n Sproul had viewed the "Beauties" on three other occasions that forenoon, for Hiram had insisted on lingering there when they had been paraded for the benefit of the spectators. There were five of them—bold-faced hussies, with painted cheeks, penciled eyelashes, short skirts, and glaring hosiery.

"May I kick it, old top?" inquired one of the minxes, making a pass at Hiram's plug hat with her toe.

"Nix on the cavort, Madge!" snapped the barker, pausing in his eulogy of the "Beauties." "The gent is an old friend of mine."

"Yes, and gave you your first job as a barker, and told you how to bark," stated Hiram proudly. "Meet Cap'n Aaron Sproul, a friend of mine. He has been high sheriff of this county."

The perspiring barker leaned down, and pump-handled the unwilling cap'n.

"Oh, ain't it joy to have a friend!" chirped one of the girls. She kneeled suddenly, and fondled the roll of beard under the cap'n's chin. "Nice dog! Won't he please bark for baby?"

Cap'n Sproul leaped back, his angry oath drowned by the guffaws of the on-lookers.

"It's all for innocent fun, cap'n—only friendly good spirits, because it's good for all of us to be alive," the barker hastened to assure him. "No harm meant. We may as well laugh in this world as cry."

Cap'n Sproul, turning to escape, found himself wedged tightly in the press, for those on the outskirts had crowded forward to see what was going on at the front. He was even forced back close to the platform on which the "Beauties" were ranged. One of the girls snatched off his broad-brimmed hat, and set it saucily on her curls.



One of the girls snatched off his broad-brimmed hat, and set it saucily on her curls.

"Here, you infernal spit of a hyena, you, give that back!" raged the cap'n.

But she tossed her head, and grinned at him.

"It's only for fun and to be gay," affirmed the barker, dividing a smile between the girl, the cap'n, and the spectators. The affair was drawing a bigger crowd every instant, and he was plainly relishing this scheme of advertising.

"Come, pay the forfeit, papa, and I'll give back the lid," cried the girl, pouting her lips suggestively.

"Don't go to losing your temper over a little innocent nonsense," advised Hiram, noting that the choleric cap'n was getting into a state of mind. "The girl means no harm. It's all a part of the day's doings. Ginger up, and have a good time!"

A fat girl snatched the hat from her companion's head, and donned it.

She kneeled, and reached out her arms.

"I'm the nicest of them all, papa. I know you will pay the forfeit to me."

The wrathful cap'n swooped his hand at the hat as though he were trying to

capture a fugitive insect; but the laughing girl ducked her head, and dodged back on the platform.

To be singled out for this horseplay, after Hiram had loudly announced his name and his former state, drove Cap'n Sproul to the limit of his naturally short temper. The laughter of the mob added to his sense of indignant injury. In spite of his years, he had a sailor's agility. He vaulted upon the platform before its occupants realized what he was about to do, and snatched the hat in his turn. He was back on the ground again ere the girls could rally, and he eluded their clutching fingers. Men fell back when he butted into the jam. The expression of his face hinted that he would be a dangerous man to oppose at that instant.

Hiram came to him when he had gained the outskirts of the crowd. The cap'n was banging his abused hat across his palm, looking at it as one would gaze on an article that had been infected.

"Seems to me I wouldn't forget to be a gent under all circumstances and in

all places," censured Hiram. "Them poor girls was only larking a little because they felt friendly. There was another way of getting your hat—and getting it all gentlemanly—instead of banging and bellowing up on that platform like a bull of Bashan."

"I could have got it another way, hey?" Slap—slap of the hat across his palm. "I suppose your idea is that I ought to have gone on a kissing mission among them girls to get this hat? Say, look here, have you brought me down to this devilnation back kitchen of Tophet to make me a part of the show?"

"No such intention! But what's the good of being a mossback where all is fun and jollity? Why not loosen up and have a little sporting blood once in a while—take things as they come, have a good laugh, and go home with your spirits fluffed up?"

"Because I've been a straight sailor-man, and haven't got any of that cussed circus nonsense in me, the same as you've got it."

"I'd rather be filled up with circus spirit than be a kag of vinegar," Hiram retorted.

The barker had begun to bellow once more, grinning at an appreciative audience:

"Feast your eyes on the Beauties of the Orient, gents. Did you ever behold such samples of female loveliness? No, you never did. Woman is the magnet that attracts—sure she is, gents! With your own eyes you have just seen the magnet in operation. You saw a man fairly lifted off the ground, rising into the air, and landing on this platform in spite of himself. That's the kind of attraction there is to this show. Come one—come all! Let yourselves be attracted to the inside of the tent, where the great show is now about to begin. The Dreamy Orient will display its wonders to your eyes, gents. A free ticket, gratis, for nothing, will be presented to the gent who just loaned his hat so kindly."

The cap'n gave that hat a final bang, put it on, and started off.

"Come along, Aaron, and be a gent,"

pleaded Hiram. "Come inside and see the show."

The cap'n trudged on.

"That fellow is a friend of mine. It was only a little harmless fun. Them girls wouldn't hurt you for the world."

"You've picked your company for the day—now go and wallow in that sculch," advised Cap'n Sproul. "When you get done wallowing I'll be ready to ride home with you."

"Have it to suit yourself," replied the offended Hiram. "It's blasted poor encouragement a man gets when he tries to find a little innocent fun for you. Maybe you can find a jib boom to furl somewhere around here."

He swung away, and returned to the tent of the Dreamy Orient. The plangor of a tom-tom and the squawking of "Streets of Cairo" music dinned in the cap'n's ears as he made his way up the crowded thoroughfare. The sound was hateful, and he kept on. At last he came to a tent in the far corner of the race-track grounds. It was a lonesome tent. There was not even a straggler from the crowds in its vicinity. A faded banner announced that it contained "Peebles' Leviathan Aggregation of World's Wonders." The loneliness of that spot attracted Cap'n Sproul after his experience in the exasperating press of the midway. He sat down on a box in front of the tent, and took off his hat, and inspected it doubtfully.

"It's what you get by teaming around with a circus fellow who has got it in his blood and can't get it out," he growled. "I'll throw this hat away when I get home. A hat that a hootchie-cootchie has worn ain't fit to be in the same house with Louada Murilla."

An old man came out of the tent, and began to pound with a stick on the side of a little barker's stand. He fixed his gaze on the cap'n, plainly scenting a prospective customer.

"Here you go now, ladies and gents! Right this way for the wonders of the world!" His voice was cracked with the falsetto of age, and he tottered as he walked to and fro. "Here you behold the most complete exhibition on the grounds. Here you can see Nancy, the

celebrated dancing turkey—Nancy, who has been received in the courts of royalty, and—"

"Say, look here, you ain't talking to me, are you?" asked the cap'n, when he had glanced about, and had seen no one else in sight.

"To one and all—to all concerned—I announce that in this tent has been collected marvels that all intelligent persons must investigate before they leave these grounds," declared the old man, in his high-pitched tones.

He kept on with his harangue until Cap'n Sproul marched up to him and shook a monitory finger under his nose.

"Snub cable! Snub cable! Cease paying out! I'm over here hunting for a little peace and quietness."

"Well, I reckon you've come to the right place," affirmed the old man consolately. "The only other place that's lonelier than this is the north pole on a cloudy day. It's all yah-yah and hootchie-cootchie in these times. They don't seem to want a moral show any longer. Look at the location they've handed out to me—and I had to sublet it, at that, from the hootchie-cootchie man. Everything goes to the hootchie-cootchie man. This world is getting to a cussed mean stage!"

"She seems to be drifting that way if you can judge anything from the actions here to-day," agreed the cap'n, scowling when he heard the distant clamor of the tom-tom.

"I haven't had a patron—I haven't taken in a cent to-day—I haven't eaten any breakfast, and I owe that hootchie man ten dollars, and he's about due to come around here bellowing for it. That's the way I'm fixed."

"Ten cents—the small sum of one dime—admits to all."

The old man's barker's instinct was strong. He shouted that information.

"Here's a quarter," said the cap'n. "I'll pay a premium for peace and quietness."

"A large and enthusiastic audience is just entering the tent to view the wonders of nature, ladies and gents," shrilled the old man. "Come one, come all, and join in the—"

Cap'n Sproul whirled at the tent's entrance, and caught at the old man's collar.

"You come along in with me. I've paid admission for you. I'll pay some more if I get the peace and quietness I'm looking for."

Peebles cast a look over his shoulder as he was dragged into the tent. No one was in the vicinity. There was no promise of any other patron. He sighed, and went along with his captor.

The little tent seemed very nearly empty. A bizarre and gaudy fowl in a crate was the most conspicuous object. The cap'n walked over and peered down at it.



Nancy wound up her performance with a sort of wild mazurka mingled with frantic double shuffling.

"I've been around the world some four times, and that's a new bird on me," he admitted.

"It's a Royal Peroovian Cockatoo," stated Mr. Peebles. "It's the only one in captivity. Secured at great expense and by the sacrifice of two human lives in——"

"Say, my friend, if you don't stop that circus-barker hollering in a place where I've paid for peace and quietness, I'll feed that bird to you raw!" declared the cap'n truculently. He put on his spectacles, and scrutinized the fowl with close attention. "That's a hen!" he snorted.

"It's a Royal——"

"See here, Peebles—if that's your name—furl canvas on that line of talk with me. I ain't in here to be lied to, or to kick about your show, or to demand my money back. You seem to be in hard luck, and here's a dollar. Now, what did you do to that hen?"

"Painted her head, dyed her feathers, and tied on them ostrich plumes," confessed Peebles readily, his trembling fingers caressing the dollar bill. "She was a white Leghorn. My God, Mr. What's-your-name, I'd starve, the way business has been going with me, if she didn't lay an egg every day."

A few feet away in a mustard bottle under a glass jar there was another exhibit. The cap'n studied it through his spectacles with interest.

"What sort of a bluff do you put up with that common angleworm?" he inquired, cocking his head to bend severe gaze on the showman.

"If you wasn't a friend and a gent who has politely requested to have barking cut out, I should inform you that this is the only infant anaconda in captivity. But I'm going to be fair and square, and own up. It's an angleworm."

"You don't win any prize out of me for that confession, Peebles. I know angleworms when I see 'em. But what in the devil you can say to a man who has paid his ten cents, and kicks, is what I can't figure out."

"Oh, that's an old story with me," stated Peebles wearily. "I ask 'em

to prove it ain't an infant anaconda—and then, if they are sassy, and say it ain't big enough, I tell 'em to stay here in the tent and wait till it grows—that there won't be any extra charge."

The cap'n pulled his spectacles to the end of his nose, and stared over them at the old faker.

"And so you've got the nerve to travel around and try to make a living out of this punk, eh?"

"Well, when things wasn't all hootchie-cootchie in this world, I used to clean up two thousand a year net with a hunk of glass for ice, pond water, and six pieces of celluloid that looked like lemon peel," said Peebles. "They used to call me 'Lemon-peel Peebles' on the circuit. Them was the good old days, mister."

"For a guess, you must have been traveling with Hime Look in his circus in those days—that sounds about like what he'd have along with him."

"Yes, I was with him for quite a number of seasons," admitted Peebles. "But he stacked his make, and I blew mine. Them was the good old days, and the coin came too easy."

Cap'n Sproul sniffed scornfully, and went along to the one other exhibit. This was a sort of wire cage with a sheet-iron floor. Peebles went behind a curtain, and produced a huge turkey. He placed the fowl in the wire cage, and shut the door. The turkey drooped head and wings disconsolately. It blinked melancholic regard at the staring cap'n.

"She's Tiptoe Nancy, the celebrated dancing turkey," stated Peebles.

"She don't seem to be in very cheerful spirits for a dancer," observed the cap'n judicially.

"Hungry—that's it. She nor me nor the Leghorn ain't had a square meal for weeks. If that angleworm couldn't eat dirt he'd be starving, too. I envy that angleworm."

Peebles reached behind the curtain, and brought forth a short pole, on the end of which was a kerosene torch. He lighted the torch. He buckled the other end of the pole to his foot with a leather strap.

"I don't let the others see how it's done. But I look on you as a special guest, mister. I ain't putting up any bluffs with you. Open and aboveboard with a friend is what I say."

He reached up, and took down a fiddle which was hanging on a tent pole. The iron floor of the wire cage was a few inches above the ground. He poked the torch under the sheet iron, and moved it about with his foot until it was flaring up against the spot where the listless turkey was standing.

"I always stand behind the curtain and hide all this preliminary," stated Peebles. "But I ain't putting up any bluffs on you, I say. This is Tiptoe Nancy, and she's going to dance, and you'll understand now why she dances."

The turkey's expression began to show less abstraction. She raised her head. She extended her drooping wings. She lifted one warty foot. Peebles began to fiddle. Then Nancy began to dance! She jiggled in lively fashion on the hot spot, and then polkaed to another section of the sheet iron. The torch followed her. She waltzed dreamily until that spot grew hot—and then she jiggled again. Peebles suited the fiddle's strains to her apparent moods. Finally all the iron grew hot, and Nancy wound up her performance with a sort of wild mazurka mingled with frantic double shuffling.

Peebles hung up the fiddle and extinguished the torch.

"It ain't bad, considering she's hungry," he remarked. "She can do better."

Cap'n Sproul tucked away his spectacles.

"I thought I had seen most ways of trying to earn a living, but I reckon the circus business has got all other ways blanketed," he said.

"I suppose if I put red stockings and a dizzy blond wig onto that turkey, and showed her how to do a wiggle dance, I'd get up with the times and make more money," vouchsafed Peebles sourly. "But if I can't get my living honest I'll get into that angleworm's class and eat dirt."

Cap'n Sproul took in the contents of

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Peebles' exhibit with leisurely and scornful gaze.

"So you call this present skinooding making an honest living, hey?"

Mr. Peebles exhibited prompt inclination to defend his means of livelihood, but there was an interruption. A man came bustling into the tent. Cap'n Sproul recognized him as the raucous barker who had been touting the Dreamy Orient show.

"Aha!" he cried, grinning at the cap'n. "You don't seem to have as much sporting blood, old top, as your running mate—Look—has got. He's up barking for my show while I'm running around tending to a little side business. Says it's taking him back to old times."

"If it would take him back and leave him there it might be better for society and his friends," remarked the cap'n.

The new arrival did not relish the scowl that accompanied this statement, and he turned on Peebles with the briskness of a man who has come on business. He held out his hand, and snapped his finger.

"Come across with that ten, Lemon-peel."

"I can't do it just this minute, Mr. Dix. She's starting slow with me; this location is——"

"Oh, can that patter, Lemon-peel! You've got a punk show, that's all. If you can't keep up with the times you'd ought to quit and let the better men have the business. I've carried you as long as I intend to. It's kale or hike for you—see?"

Peebles looked alarmed. It was plain that Dix meant what he said. The old man slowly produced the money that Cap'n Sproul had paid.

"That's the whole cash capital in the treasury just now, Mr. Dix. I'll hand you a dollar on account. But I wish you'd let me keep the quarter. Nancy and the cockatoo need some corn the worst way."

"No, sir; it's ten, or scoot! I'm a busy man. I can't keep chasing you for installments, Lemon-peel. You're down and out, and you might as well quit. Go to farming. You've got some poultry to start with." He winked at Cap'n



"I feel I have been called on for a sacrifice."

Sproul. "I say you've got no chance. Your show is punk. It hurts the profesh. You've got to give the peop their money's worth these days."

"My show is better than your job of teaming poor lost girls out on a platform to be gawped at and insulted by loafers!" blazed Peebles, made desperate.

"The girls enjoy the life, or they wouldn't be there, Lemon-peel. You can't pay, hey? Pack your kit. I'm going to send the boys up here and toss you and your stuff off the grounds." He rushed out.

Cap'n Sproul was a bit astonished by Peebles' demeanor at that moment. The old man sighed, and put the fiddle away in its case. He tottered about the tent. He began to dismantle his show. In the silence the shriek of the midway music and the beating of the tom-tom came to their ears. The cap'n expected anger and rebellious words from Peebles. But the old man made no further comment on his own plight.

"No, sir, them girls don't like it, mister. They may make believe they do. They have to make believe. But down

deep in the heart of every one who has been born a woman there is shame and sorrow when she has to do things them girls are called on to do."

He wrapped the bottle of the infant anaconda in an old blanket, and sighed again.

"They do care—they girls do care, deep down, mister. I reckon I'm too old-fashioned to stay in the show business. I ain't bragging on the kind of money I've made with this show, but it ain't the kind of dirty money that comes from teaming poor shamed girls. No, sir, I won't try to keep up with the times in no such fashion. The Leviathan Aggregation is the last one of the old-time shows. You've seen the last performance. I know it wasn't worth a dollar and a quarter, but we done the best we could."

The cap'n fingered his nose thoughtfully, and regarded Peebles with new interest. He had found a quality in this old wanderer of the circuit that he hadn't looked for. He did not know what remark to offer. Peebles went on packing his scanty belongings. It was very quiet in the tent. The abrupt re-

turn of the breezy Dix startled the cap'n.

"Look here, Lemon-peel, I'm going to give you a show if you'll turn a little chore for me—and you can do it mighty easy. Seeing that you're a friend of Hime Look's, I ain't going to soft soap my voice any," stated Mr. Dix, giving the cap'n another suggestive wink. "It's this way, Lemon-peel: There's a little married dame from upcountry who wants to join the show. Well, that is, she wants to join me. Ain't married happily. Husband is a stable swipe for that string of trot horses over in B stables. She has been following around the circuit with him, and that's how I have seen her more or less. You can't blame a girl—a pretty girl—for wanting to shake a swipe, eh?"

He looked from one to the other of the old men. He winked again.

"So that's all there is to it, boys. But the swipe has piped something all at once. He's going to grab her under his arm and start for home with her as soon as these races are over. Here's where you fit, Lemon-peel. You've got a good lonesome place here. I'm going to smuggle the girl into your back tent. I just saw her, and told her to get her things and come here. You'll be all safe. That husband would never hunt for her here. She'll make her get-away with me as soon as it gets dark. Now you understand. We'll be sports together—the profesh has got to back its members, eh? Give her the back tent, and keep an eye on her, and we'll cancel the debt. Yes, better than that! I'll slip ten dollars to you when I come after her, if you keep a good eye on her, and talk to her if she begins to squeal. Talk to her like a good old sport, Lemon-peel. You never can tell when a girl is going to get cold feet. Tell her the show business is all right. It's a great life, tell her. Knock that trot-horse manicurist of hers."

He ran to the flap of the tent, and peered.

"Here she comes! Remember your card, Lemon-peel."

Dix met her at the entrance, and explained hastily, and bolted away.

She was plainly a country girl, a pink-and-white slip of a thing, and her face flushed as she lowered her eyes before the somber gaze of the two elderly men.

Then the cap'n stared at Peebles, and Peebles stared at the cap'n.

"A man is pretty busy in the hootchie-cootchie business when he has to have two assistants for the outside work," remarked the cap'n.

"I was going to say a few things to him, but he run off before I could get my tongue started," confessed Peebles. "You take a man that's hungry, and he ain't quick on his feet, or nimble with his tongue. You better sit down on that box yonder, young woman. I had orders left in regard to you. Orders was to talk to you like a good old sport."

He and the cap'n had taken seats on a chest. Side by side they sat, as erect and as solemn as penguins. The girl cast glances at them. There were mingled bravado and shame in her eyes.

Peebles seemed to be searching for words. The cap'n was readier.

"All of us being close friends—us, and you, and Dix—we can talk all nice and free, marm."

"I'm sure you are Harold's—I'm sure you are Mr. Dix's friends," she faltered. "I hope you understand—what it—what I—"

"We understand, marm. You take a masher like Dix, and he always has a friend or so to tell it all to. Peebles and me are great chums of Dix—great chums. He has told us all about you. How you ain't married happy and so forth, and want to run away and be happy with him. He wanted us to tell you that it's a great life you're going to have."

The red in her cheeks grew deeper.

"When you put the case that way, sir, it sounds as though I am a wicked woman, and that I am running away from my husband because I am flirty and frivolous. As friends of Mr. Dix, I want you to understand that I am not a wicked woman. I want you to know that I am going away because I feel I have been called on for a sacrifice."

"That's a nice polite way of talking

about joining a hootchie-cootchie show," said the cap'n. "I naturally use stronger language myself about such things, but we'll let your description stand."

"But it's this way, gentlemen," she cried, eager to justify herself in the eyes of those who had been proclaimed friends: "I am ruining my husband by staying married to him. His folks are rich. I was only a girl out of an industrial school—an orphan. I was bound out to work in his folks' kitchen. I know I shouldn't have run away with him and got married. But we

to cure a man's toothache is to cut off his head?"

The cap'n gazed at her for some time, knitting his brows.

"But as to this idea of running away with our close and dear friend Dix?" he queried. "Of course, Peebles and I love Dix, and perhaps might be induced to elope with him ourselves. But why do you want to rub it in by joining a hootchie-cootchie show?"

"I'm not going to join that show. Mr. Dix loves me. If I go away with him, my husband will stop loving me,



She dropped her escort's arm near the stables, and ran to a young man and kissed him.

were awfully in love. And his people have disowned him. He wasn't brought up to work. All he knew anything about was horses. He just had to take this job he's got. I cry my eyes out when I think of what he has sacrificed. I love him too much to see him suffer any longer. So I'm going to run away, and then his folks will take him back."

"You think he loves you, don't you?"

She began to sob. Her bravado was gone.

"I know he does."

"But you're going to run away and leave him?"

"I feel that's the best way."

"On the principle that the best way

and will forget me as an unworthy woman—and then I shall have made my sacrifice for him."

The cap'n looked at Peebles, and Peebles looked at the cap'n.

"A woman is two-thirds ostrich and one-third wild cat," observed Peebles. "Having been in the show business all my life, I've owned an ostrich and a wild cat—and I know their style."

Cap'n Sproul folded his arms. He sat straighter.

"You look up at me, my girl," he commanded. "When I've got something special to say to any one, I like to have that one look at me. You've been past that hootchie show, haven't you?"

She nodded. In the moment of silence they heard the distant voice of the barker and the snarl of the music.

"You've seen those girls. They wear paint on their faces to hide their blush of shame. They are standing up there now trying to make men think they are laughing, but their hearts are crying. You needn't tell me different. I have that much faith in women. And you are starting in to make your heart cry all the rest of your life. Now, how do you suppose it happened that those girls are up there to-day on that platform, to be mocked and insulted? Why, my girl, it is men like our friend Dix who put 'em there! That's the business of a man like Dix. A month of what they call love, and then hell for the rest of a girl's life. But that's all in the way of your sacrifice, you say. Gawd A'mighty, girl, don't you understand living and loving and men any better than what you're showing up now to me and old Peebles here?"

He got up, and went across to her, and stood above her.

"Don't hide your head. Don't be an ostrich. Look up at me.

"You talk of making your husband happy by running away. You young fool! Don't you realize that the worst misery and shame and torture a man's heart can hold is when he is ashamed of the woman he loves?"

He drove his hands together.

"Wake up, you fool! You think, do you, that you are helping a husband when you are making a man out of him who can't look other men in the eye without awful, bitter shame—who thinks about that shame daytimes, and wakes in the night to think about it? That's what you are leaving behind you when you run away from your husband. That is what a woman can do to a man when she is a fool."

The girl began to sob.

"What kind of a mother did you have? Didn't she ever tell you any of the things a girl ought to know?" the cap'n demanded.

"I never knew who my mother was, sir. I was left in a basket on the steps of a hospital."

Cap'n Sproul turned, fingering his nose once more. He and the old showman exchanged a long look.

"Well, Peebles," he said, after a pause, "we've got to admit that when a girl starts out like that she starts out back-handed, so to speak. Things don't focus up with her the way they ought to. My feelings sort of got away from me, sissy. I didn't mean to stand up and give an oration—I was using language that sort of surprised me when I heard it coming. We'll settle down now, and stick to sociable talk. The whole idea is that you have let a renegade talk foolishness into you—and old Peebles and me will have to give you some good common sense."

"I'm afraid I can't put it up to you as neat and strong as my friend here has done," said Peebles. "But what he has said is my sentiments. This ain't any hootchie-cootchie training school you are in now, marm. It ain't anything but a busted old faker, and some folks might think it was pretty cheeky for me to warn a girl about mistakes. But don't you get caught by any of the bait that critter is using; I know him, I tell you. I've been on the circuit with him. He'll toss you into Tophet, and laugh while he is doing it. Take my advice, even if it does come from an old faker. Run back to your husband as fast as ever you can run—and don't ever be foolish again. I'm afraid you have been reading too many mushy novels. I've known good women to have their heads turned after they got wrong ideas out of a novel."

"It is just as though I were waking up out of a dream," confessed the girl, struggling with her sobs. She regarded the two old men with tear-dimmed eyes. "It's just as though I had found a father, or—or an uncle, or—somebody to talk to me and make me see I have been a silly fool."

"What's your first name, Peebles?" inquired Cap'n Sproul, concealing his emotions under brusqueness.

"Aaron."

"Huh! That's my name, too. Well, sissy, you have run against two Uncle Aarons. It's too bad you didn't start

out in life with the right kind of relatives. From this time on, remember that you've got two uncles who would be dreadfully sorry to have you make a mistake. I reckon it was a dream you was having a few minutes ago. Now stay awake. Keep your eyes open after this when a renegade comes snooping around."

Cap'n Sproul was a man who believed in prompt measures—for sailors must meet emergencies promptly. He marched up to the girl, took her arm, and started out of the tent with her.

"You come along, and show me where your husband is. No, you needn't be frightened. I shan't say a word to him about this. I just want to stand off at one side and see you run up to him and give him a good kiss and put your arms around his neck. That will be your signal to your Uncle Aaron that you are back where you ought to be and propose to stay there ever after this."

She dropped her escort's arm near the stables, and ran to a young man and kissed him, and thereby raised an embarrassed flush on the young man's cheek, for there were onlookers. But the young man juted his chin, and glared at those who grinned, and then he patted his pretty wife's shoulder, bravely boasting in this mute fashion of his proprietorship.

"That's the way it ought to be," meditated the cap'n, retracing his steps. "I reckon that a fool spell comes to most every woman once, and the trouble is that the right party doesn't happen to come along and hold 'em steady till the dizzy feeling has passed. In the snap of a finger it's decided for hell or happiness sometimes in this life. I wonder what it was that gave me that language I used to her? It seems to me some words dropped out that I never knew was in me before."

The cap'n trudged sturdily up the midway. He growled a naughty word when he espied Hiram bellowing from the barker's rostrum of the Dreamy Orient show. He replied to his friend's good-humored wink by shaking his fist belligerently.

"Tell your boss pirate that he better rush up to Peebles' tent. There's something on that needs his attention."

Cap'n Sproul arrived at the tent just ahead of the perspiring and perturbed Dix, who had evidently found the spur of sinister portent in the message.

"What does the outfit here—this Leviathan Aggregation—owe you? What do we—me and Peebles—owe you?" demanded Cap'n Sproul, clutching Dix by the coat sleeve in order to get his attention, for Dix was peering uneasily about the tent.

"How do you fit into this show game?"

"Partners," stated the cap'n.

"Well, ten dollars settles the old debt, and there's five more for this meet's ground rent."

"There's your money. Now we don't owe you anything, hey? We stand free and clear, eh?"

"That squares all, mister. Say, what about this call—is the little dame—"

"That lady has been told what sort of a cheap, low-down hoss mackerel you are; she came to her senses, and left word that she would hit you with the first thing that came handy if you ever show your pie-eyed face to her again; she even put it stronger, but I don't remember the exact words. She is back with her husband, and is devilish glad to be there. I know she is there because I took her there myself, and left 'em hugging and kissing—and I want to inform you that no man ever uses the kind of language you are now using to me and gets away without broken bones."

The first kick reached the profane and abusive Dix; but the second kick missed, for Dix had fled, knowing a dangerous man when he saw one.

Cap'n Sproul chased his quarry out of the tent, and pursued him for some distance, but he was not fleet enough to catch the fugitive, who had for the first time in his life faced a master mariner in a first-class passion.

"I'm sorry, Peebles," the cap'n apologized, when he was back in the tent. "My plan was to give him a second kick for you. But I found I wasn't

in his class when it came to running. Cheap goats like him have to be all-fired light on their feet, or else some honest man would catch 'em and kill 'em. Here's another five dollars for you, Peebles. No, don't be foolish about it—I've got plenty of money, and I relish spending same when I'm getting the good out of it. You go out and

buy some grub—and I'll sit in here and enjoy peace and quietness till that old howlawhooferus of a Hime Look gets done his spree and is ready to start for home. What's that? Oh, well, Peebles, if you feel that way about it you can come back here and pay me with some quick-step tunes on that fiddle. I'd relish a little lively music about now."



One Sigh for Summer

THE afternoon is as warm as ever,
Our leafy wood is as thick to pass,
The sky is like June without June's fever,
Pure of the thunder mass.

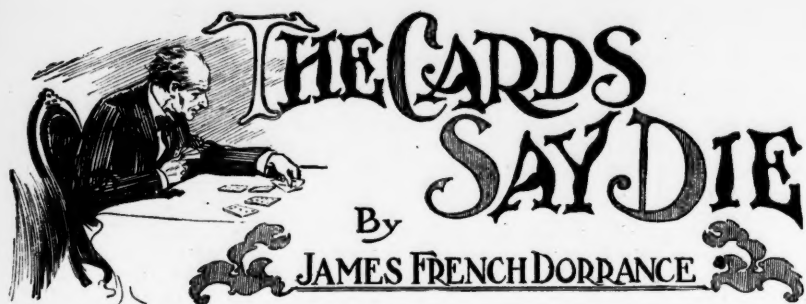
September should be a little warm,
And dry, with the whole sweet world a-scent
Like a mow of hay; and the chirping charm
Of things in the grasses pent.

But a change is creeping. Dear, I was wrong;
The warmth is less as the sun slips down;
And the last of the roses that stood so long
Dribbles its cool, sweet crown.

You need not shiver, for I am here
To wrap you safe in a coat of tweed,
And there waits in our cushioned corner, dear,
Dreamy old verse to read.

Summers must go, and the autumn's red,
And peacock tints round the drift log meet,
But oh, when those leaves where our vows were said
Die under strangers' feet!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



THE CARDS SAY DIE

By
JAMES FRENCH DORRANCE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

WHEN the young minority stockholders of the Harlem Cordage Company first suggested that Old Man Thurston modernize the works at the hands of a business expert, he vehemently flouted the idea. Hurt in the pride of a lifetime, perhaps doubly hurt because he realized the possibility of room for improvement, he argued that he had known how to make and sell rope before the professional business surgeon was dreamed of, and reminded them of the stability of the company's business, with its modest dividends "as regular as the quarters."

At last, however, just to show that he was not despotic because he owned fifty-one of the company's hundred shares of stock, the old fellow had told the younger members to send on their expert, and "they would see what they would see." Within an hour from the time his carrot-headed office boy had brought in the engraved card which read "Alex. Basil Woodhouse, Business Surgeon and Production Engineer," Old Man Thurston had departed for Florida on his first real vacation in years, grunting, as a parting shot, that he would return in a month's time "to view the remains."

With all the flagrant self-sufficiency of his twenty-seven years, Alex. Basil Woodhouse took charge of the works as though he owned the concern and had spent a lifetime in the cordage trade. In the plant proper he at once found several ways to increase the efficiency and decrease production expense.

But it was in the office, cobwebbed with the habit of years, that he effected his greatest revolution. Each departure of office régime aroused the disdain of Cyrus Smiley, the aged chief clerk, who, after a faithful service of more than half a lifetime, found his greatest pride in that title.

"And what in the world may this contrivance be?" Cyrus demanded of the new stenographer, indicating a tall case of yellow wood which had been added overnight to the office fixtures.

"That, old top, is an indexed filing cabinet for correspondence—an absolute necessity in the modern business establishment," explained this latest comer.

Cyrus sniffed, for until the advent of Woodhouse the letters of the cordage company had been written in the intimate script of an underclerk, who had never learned the pothooks of Pitman.

"A necessity!" he scoffed aloud. "I've cared for the correspondence of this concern for thirty years without any indexed filing cabinet, and never lost a letter. It's a crime to spend the company's good money on these folders that just litter up an office."

His withered fingers worked for a time with the combination of the old-fashioned vault. After the doors had finally swung back under his manipulation of the dial, he abstracted, one by one, the massive tomes of his antiquated system of bookkeeping, and placed them upon a high desk.



"You don't mean me?" he gasped.

"You won't have to pack those ancient elephants around much longer," observed the new stenographer. "The young boss has ordered a set of loose-leaf ledgers, and soon we'll have up-to-the-minute accounts."

"He has, has he?" growled Smiley, his look belying his name, for the big ledgers which held the records of years without blot or unnecessary pen scratches were his particular pride. "Well, all I've got to say is that it was a sorry day for the Harlem Cordage Company when Mr. Thurston turned the reins over to this business surgeon—business quack I call him!"

Crossing the room, he glared at the new adding machine, and touched several of the keys disdainfully.

"A machine to do your arithmetic—bah!" he exclaimed, as he returned to his beloved ledgers.

"Boss wants you inside!" announced Carrots, the errand boy, who was the one up-to-date thing Woodhouse had found about the place. He tapped Cyrus peremptorily on the shoulder.

"He's thought out some other new fangle," sighed the old clerk, moving slowly toward the inner room, limping from his rheumatism.

"Smiley," began the expert, in a voice devoid of feeling, "I've decided that the company doesn't need your services any longer. I've given you a month to adapt yourself to the modern methods I've introduced; but, as they say, an old dog is not for new tricks. I am installing a new system of bookkeeping, and you could never manage it. Here is two months' pay, which is much better than the usual notice."

So firm an office fixture had Cyrus Smiley considered himself that he had taken no personal alarm over the innovations of the past month. Had not Old Man Thurston often told him that his job was for life? He could not believe his ears.

"You don't mean me?" he gasped.

"You heard me," said Woodhouse sharply.

"Mr. Thurston said——"

"Mr. Thurston has turned the entire

renovation of the works over to me, and you'll have to go."

"It's heartless to turn me out after thirty years—at my age. I was sixty last June, Mr. Woodhouse."

"Business has no heart, Smiley," observed the business surgeon. "With steady employment for that period, you should have saved enough to keep you in comfort for the rest of your years."

"Saved!" exclaimed the old man. "I never learned to save."

"You clerks beat me," observed Woodhouse, in a disapproving tone. "You seem to think you can work on and draw salary forever. Sorry, Smiley, but it is your own fault."

"That don't buy food, or pay rent," cried Cyrus. "Can't I stay on as an underclerk?"

"You'd only be an office irritant," declared the expert.

"As messenger, then?" begged Smiley.

"You're not fast enough. There's nothing to be gained by further discussion. I'll trouble you for the combination of the vault."

This request made Cyrus Smiley realize to the full the blow that had so unexpectedly fallen upon him. The combination of the big vault had for years been his particular trust.

"That, too!" he sobbed.

"Oh, it will be changed to-morrow; but we might need the old combination in the morning," returned Woodhouse.

Smiley took his worn diary from his breast pocket, and began to shuffle the pages. The significant numbers were hidden there by certain marks under scattered date figures.

Thirty-two—turn right to eleven—left to forty-three—two whirls—stop at nineteen—right to fifty.

It took the old man three or four minutes to garner this from the hidden data in his book. Woodhouse fretted openly at the delay.

"A fine way to keep a combination!" he sneered. "What's the matter with your memory? Have you wasted all that time every morning all these years picking out the figures?"

"My fingers remember, sir, when they have the feel of the dial," excused Cyrus. "I never tried to recite it before."

"Hear me!" cried Woodhouse; and he rattled off the combination accurately. "I don't need to write it down. The well-trained modern business man uses his memory, Smiley. Good morning."

With bowed head, the clerk stumbled from the expert's presence. From a peg on the wall he took his hat and coat, and put them on. There was no one for him to bid good-by. All the old force had left before him. The new stenographer—he would as soon have shaken hands with the adding machine. Almost at the door he returned to take one last look into the big ledger.

"Loose leaf!" he muttered.

As he passed the stove which occupied the center of the office, he halted, then swung open its door. In among the blazing coals he tossed the pocket diary, with its many office secrets and the combination. The immediate gay blaze made him stumble more hurriedly toward his mournful exit.

Although Mrs. Smiley had placed the sewing machine before the best-lighted window of their little Harlem flat, she could not induce the thread to enter the needle's eye. Time and again she tried it, her white head bent low to the shining bit of steel, her eyes squinting in the effort.

Finally she arose, with a sigh, and went into the tiny kitchen to bathe her aching eyes at the sink. Then she replaced her glasses and returned to the recalcitrant needle. This time the thread went through the eye at her first attempt, and she indulged in a dry, cackling laugh.

"It was not the needle, after all," she commented aloud, after the habit of one much alone. "I really believe my eyes are failing. What ever will Cyrus do for shirts if they go plumb back on me? He's been wearing my soft home-mades so long now that it'd be just torture for him to wear one out of a store."

She started the machine, working the treadle with the foot that held the fewest neuralgic throbs. Soon the sleeve of a shirt for her husband began to take form. Her voice droned the tune of a favorite hymn as she worked, now and then contributing a word of the verse.

For forty years the Smileys—Cyrus and Martha—had lived and worked for each other. It had been a dull, monotonous existence; but neither husband nor wife knew it. It was the only life they had ever lived, and in their ignorance it had satisfied. If Cyrus had nursed ambitions in his youth, the deadly grind of office work had effectively smothered them; and Martha had proven merely his dear companion, neither an inspiration nor a handicap.

Once, many years before, there had been a baby that for four years had added zest to existence and put new energy into both of them. But after the little one was taken they had soon slipped back into the old uneventful round. Cyrus' earning capacity had been stationary for twenty years; at first because he lacked initiative to ask for increased pay, then because the wage had become fixed with time. Finances had never worried them, however, and they had always lived up to the pay envelope, with just a trifle in the savings bank for a possible rainy day. They felt secure enough, for hadn't Old Man Thurston several times assured Cyrus that his job was for life? God would surely see to it that when they were called it would be very near together. Either one would have been

utterly at a loss how to exist without the other.

For several hours after the discharge blow had fallen from Woodhouse's unfeeling lips, Cyrus Smiley had limped about the streets like a man suffering from aphasia. Had any one stopped him suddenly, and demanded his name, he would have been puzzled for an answer. His mental and nervous systems were stunned by the shock.

"Out of a job at my age!" he kept

repeating to himself. "Out of a job at sixty!"

About one o'clock he found himself sitting in a little park near the flat he had known as home. His head ached terribly, terribly. His heart thumped forebodingly. For it seemed to him that the hardest part of this unexpected trial was yet to come. He would have to tell Martha—dear, kind-hearted Martha, who had always filled her half of their partnership with her perfectly ordered housekeeping. He would

have to tell Martha that he had been dismissed from the office, discarded as a worn-out machine, and that they faced—

At first he could not bring himself to mouth the dire word.

"Charity!" he finally muttered. "Charity!"

The hope became born in him that he could slip into the flat without arousing Martha. If he could only take some rest first, he might find it easier to break the news to her. It was quite possible that she might be out marketing, or calling on some neighbor. The



"I really believe my eyes are failing."

thought struck him like a knife that he did not know what his wife's daytime program was, that until now the work hours had always found him at his desk. And sometimes the work hours had seemed long. How had it been possible for him to think so? What wouldn't he give to have them back, doubled even, at the same pay? Oh, the joy of a job to the man who has lost his! If those who had employment only knew how miserable they would be without it, he brooded, how much less grumbling and shirking there would be!

The four flights of stairs that led to the landing of his home had never seemed so short before. At the same time, his feet had never seemed so heavy, not even when he had worked overtime at month ends. Never could he remember having sneaked into his own home like a thief in the night. Always before the door had opened with a magic welcome, culminating when Martha's lips pecked a wifely kiss on his cheek.

But so stealthily had he ascended the stairs to-day that he was able to insert the latchkey with a skill he did not know he possessed, and to close the door behind him without a sound. He had almost reached the cover of the bedroom when a board in the flooring creaked. Starting violently, Martha turned from her sewing machine, and saw him. His heart sank.

"Land's sake, Cyrus Smiley, what a fright you did give me!" she cried, although not forgetting her usual smile of greeting. "I'll have to tie a bell around your neck to keep you from startling the life out of me."

Crossing the room, she kissed him, and took his hat and coat. Still Cyrus said nothing.

Then her eye encountered the clock, and read the hour as half after one. She almost dropped the coat which she was about to hang in the closet.

"Cyrus," she cried, "whatever are you doing home at this hour of the afternoon?"

"An unexpected half holiday," he replied, in a dull voice.

"What sort of holiday? Why a holiday at this time of year?"

"A surprise from Mr. Woodhouse, the business expert."

Sturdy among his miseries was Cyrus' ambition not to lie, although he was unable to summon enough courage to tell the truth. Acting being entirely out of his line, he failed to keep despair from his voice.

"Do tell!" cried Mrs. Smiley astutely. "You get an unexpected holiday, and you come home glum as an oyster. That is no way to behave. I believe you really enjoy bending over those old ledgers and adding up columns of figures until your poor eyes burn!"

"They have adding machines for the figures now, Martha," he observed, with the hope that this faint complaint might give him an opening to break the news; then sank heavily into the high-backed rocking-chair in which he wontedly spent his evenings.

"We must have a celebration," chirped Mrs. Smiley. "What shall it be? The weather is too cold for a stroll in the park, and we went to the museum last Saturday afternoon. I have it! I'll spread you a real company luncheon!"

"Don't know as I'm hungry, Martha," objected Cyrus lamely.

"You will be when you see the spread I'll set for you," she continued. "Now, be patient just a jiffy until I run around the corner to the market. A holiday luncheon has to be scrumptious, and there are a few things I need."

She had donned her jacket and hat, and was out the door before he found the heart to check her. As her footsteps on the stairs died away, his grizzled head dropped to the table.

"Good Lord," he demanded, "what have I done to deserve this?"

But for once religion failed to comfort him. Perhaps, he thought, the extremity was too great. More likely, he reasoned, there was too much bitterness in his heart against Woodhouse, the interloper, the upstart, the disturber of well-ordered things.

Leaving the chair, he began to pace the floor with faltering steps, thrashing

out in his mind the varied phases of the unexpected crisis. Was there a chance of getting another place—at sixty? He knew that the answer would be thumbs down. What business man would break in a worn-out clerking machine, set in the routine of another office, under the suspicion of incompetence from the very fact that he had been turned out after so many faithful years?

Bitterly did Cyrus now regret his improvidence in depending on Old Man Thurston's promise that his job would hold for life. Why had he not taken life insurance? Surely he had been urged often enough to do so by glib-tongued agents who had pointed out just such dire twists in life as now confronted him! With life insurance, there would have been a way out—for Martha. He could have slipped from life in some unobtrusive way, and left his dear woman an escape from charity, that frightful bugaboo to which Woodhouse had recommended him.

"Suicide!" muttered hoarse, insistent voices in the back of his brain. "Suicide!"

But it would not help Martha for him to die. She would be forced just as surely to fall back on charity, to hold out her withered hand for alms. Again the old clerk sank into the worn rocking-chair, and buried his face in his hands. His head was throbbing unmercifully. He pressed his temples hard to relieve their tension. He breathed with difficulty.

Dragging himself to the mantel, he saw himself in the mirror. Surely those eyes staring back at him could not be his own! They were glaring, bloodshot strangers. Their look frightened him as they reflected a portentous message. Yes, there was one way out! The strange eyes wandered to the gas jets.

"If I go," muttered Cyrus, "I must take Martha with me."

Then his conscience, a worthy conscience, muscled from a lifetime of constant exertion, rose up indignantly within him. That way out—the gas way—spelled murder as well as suicide. What

right had he to take Martha's life? Why, even his own life was not his to close! And Martha—she was so glad just to be alive and to do for him!

But in a few weeks they would be turned out of the homelike flat for rent unpaid. In time they would go hungry. Their clothing would not last forever. Would even Martha desire to live on charity, the cold, harsh, organized charity of the great city? He knew that charity. Neighbors, upon whom misfortune had fallen, had been forced to it as a last resort. Organized charity—every morsel bound in red tape, every crumb bitter with humiliation.

Far better, he argued, take her with him into the unknown, without a hint of the tragedy that had entered their lives. Indeed, would it not be humane to spare her—a last kindness in return for her lifetime of faithful service?

"Do it while there is yet enough to decently bury the two of you," urged his mind. His eyes hovered about the gas jet, picturing their painless death in the night for the simple turning of the cocks.

The mind and heart of Cyrus Smiley were torn to a degree. In his unsteady tramp about the room, he chanced to collide with a card table on which was laid out a half-finished game of "Old Patience," abandoned the night before under the compelling demand of a worker's sleep. Inspiration seemed to lie in that uncompleted game.

"Why not let the cards decide?" he muttered.

Fate had brought Martha and him to this bitter pass. Let fate determine whether there was any other way out than death.

Nervously Cyrus jerked a chair to the table, and sat himself before the pasteboards. Then once more he held his throbbing temples, and shuddered. His determination seemed stumbling, but, with a mighty effort, he commanded his faculties. If he won the game, he would consider it a token from fate that a way of life for Martha and himself would be provided. If "Old Patience" won, they would die together that night.



"Quick, Smiley, the combination!" he cried.

He did not essay a new deal, but began with the cards as they had lain overnight. The old man's expert glance assured him that his chances of winning were more than average. All of the aces had appeared, and two of the four piles had been successfully built in the required sequence from ace to king. With superstitious eyes, he glanced through the cards in the five depots. They seemed to rank encouragingly. He counted those still remaining in the pack, the cards of mystery, the cards which held the sentence for Martha and himself. Were they cards of life, or cards of death?

Never had Cyrus Smiley played his favorite game with such deliberation. Although on fire with anxiety, he was as calm as an expert chess player. Ever before him was the stake for which he played—the stake of two lives.

Gradually the squares of pasteboard

fell into place, the piles being builded upward from the aces growing higher, the cards in the pack and depots decreasing. The face of the player was ghastly, his jaw hanging lax with dread. But often a spark would light in his faded eyes, the spark of the lust of life. His hands would shake like aspens as he moved the cards. His heart would swoon with horror when they seemed frequently blocked, then would pound his side in an agony of relief as he would turn from the pack the card that saved him.

"Praise God! Praise God!" he breathed, when a nine-spot of diamonds turned up in

time to release a blockaded six, giving a new lease to his game—to life.

So intent was the old clerk on his game with fate that he did not hear the door of the living room open. He did not notice his wife slip into the room.

Something in the attitude, in the ghastly earnestness of the bent figure, startled her. The reflection of Cyrus' face could be seen in the mantel mirror. Instinctively she knew that her husband was not playing to-day for pastime. Tiptoeing softly, she approached to where she could watch his game.

The moving of the cards halted finally. In Cyrus' hand was a knave which had been turned from the dwindling pack. Even she could see that the play demanded a ten-spot. Cyrus glared at the guilty card, just one removed from that he needed.

"Woodhouse!" he muttered. "The knave!"

He drew a long, quivering breath, then tossed the jack on the table face up. There was no pile ready to receive it. Critically he looked through the deposits. There was no further possible play. He had lost the game.

From the bloodless lips of the old clerk there issued a maniacal laugh.

"We die!" he shrieked aloud. "The cards say die! We die!"

Then he crashed face forward on the table.

In an instant the wife's arms were about him.

"Cyrus!" she sobbed. "Cyrus! What—what is wrong?"

But Cyrus continued to cling to the table, sobbing, moaning into the cards.

"Die!" he wailed. "The cards say die!"

She raised his white head, and kissed him on the temple, then forced his eyes to meet hers. In his she saw clearly reflected the horror of his soul. Starting back, she stared into this look of her husband.

"Cyrus, what do you mean?" she demanded, full of fear. "Who—*who* is to die?"

But his head dropped again upon the cards.

The clatter of running feet upon the stairs burst on their ears. Then there came an impatient, commanding summons to the door.

Lifting his head, Cyrus stared wildly at his wife. A guilty supernatural fear gripped his heart. He feared—he knew not what.

To Martha the interruption was most welcome. Anything to break the horrible spell which had fallen over her husband. Stumbling across the room, she threw open the door.

A hatless young man, no longer dapper, with hair disheveled, and face blanched as with fear, dashed into the room.

"Old Smiley?" he cried between gasps for breath. "Your husband? Quick, woman, where is he?"

"Woodhouse!" muttered Cyrus, rising unsteadily from the table. "The knave!" A maniacal chortle crossed his bloodless lips.

With one spring, the business surgeon was at his side.

"Quick, Smiley, the combination!" he cried.

"What?" gasped Cyrus dazedly. "What do you want?"

"The combination of the vault at the office, man!"

"Why do you follow me here to torture me?" Cyrus demanded, with a sudden influx of rage. "You know there is no more office for me."

"Mr. Thurston returned this noon," Woodhouse explained rapidly; "went into the vault to look for some papers, and——"

"Mr. Thurston back!" interrupted Cyrus. "Maybe——"

"The new stenographer has accidentally locked him in!" Woodhouse fairly shouted. "Get out your book, Smiley, and give me that combination again. Don't you understand, man? Thurston is smothering to death in the vault!"

"I—I burned the book," Cyrus uttered dreamily.

"You burned it?" gasped the younger man.

"I threw it in the stove at the office," continued Cyrus. "I burned up the office secrets. You said you would remember."

"And it will be hours before the safe crackers can batter down those doors," Woodhouse staggered against the mantel, and clung to it. "Thurston will die!"

"The combination I gave you," added Cyrus; "it was right."

"Don't taunt me with that foolish boast of mine," pleaded the expert. "My memory has lost it—failed me for the first time. My damn faulty memory has killed Thurston! What a fool I was not to write the numbers down—an unmitigated, overconfident fool!"

Old Smiley faced him with a stare that was far from full understanding.

"What were those numbers?" groaned young Woodhouse. "Can't you remember, Smiley, and get your job back for life—for Thurston's life and mine?"

At one word of the expert's plea an intelligent light had come into Cyrus'

crazed eyes. Straightening, he seemed to shed in the movement all the wildness of his mood.

"The *numbers?*" he cried. "Why, man, my fingers will remember them!"

They twisted and twirled an imaginary dial.

"Thank God!" cried Woodhouse, grabbing him by the arm and rushing him to the door.

"Your overcoat, Cyrus!" Martha called after them. "Your hat!"

But they did not heed her. Already they had clattered halfway down the stairs, and the front door stood open.

She heard the excited put-putting of a motor in the street below. But by the time she had thrown up the window and looked out there was nothing to be seen except a cloud of scattering dust halfway down the block.

"Get his job back? Get Cyrus' job back? Nonsense!" she commented incredulously, as she jerked down the window. "My ears are just playing tricks. And now Cyrus won't be here to eat the lunch! But thank goodness we have a refrigerator! And I guess he'll be back soon. Plague take the ways of that office! Who ever saw anything like it?"



On a Hilltop

DEAR little friend, I mind me how your hair
Was braided loosely, how the tendrils stirred
Like sudden sunlight in the Autumn air.

I mind your laughter as some April bird
Had lingered in the voiceless woods alone,

The softness of your little hand on mine
As up the steep we plodded, stone on stone.

I say it, line by line,
As men may say a prayer gone often o'er

For very love. Along that mossy stair
You gathered goldenrod, and upward bore

The radiant load that stirred against your hair.
Here is the topmost peak where, poised, you stood
All light and laughter. And to-day—how rare!—

A million violets bathe it in a flood
Of purple wine! Oh, did it feel your tread,

Poor barren hill, alone within the wood
When all the world was dead?

And doth it bloom for that you tarried there
As blooms my heart with prayer?

MARGARET BELLE HOUSTON.



ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT HENCKE

IN the hour in which the last lilac-odored twilight of May was merged into the first star-spangled night of June, Ezra Darwood, collarless and with the sleeves of his white shirt upturned, sat in his old green armchair, and looked half abstractedly at a point in the path just below the lower step of the porch. Indifferently, but from force of habit, he was watching for the appearance of Tommy, the toad, who rarely failed to scramble from under the porch at this time, and, with two hops, a pause, four hops, another pause, and then four hops again, start forth on his search for insect prey.

The old toad soon slipped into view. Ezra counted the hops and the pauses as he had done each succeeding spring. The number and time of each seldom varied, nor were they to-night an exception to the rule. When the toad had disappeared, the old man turned to the honeysuckle vines which partly surrounded the porch. He sighed as he remembered that he had failed this year to tear down the sticks of the preceding summer. This neglect would result, he knew, in a far less luxuriant growth and fewer blossoms than ever before.

"Anyhow, what's the use?" he mut-

tered moodily. "Flowers don't stand for nothin' more to me."

He was in the act of passing one of his horny hands over his eyes, when his attention was attracted by a soft click at the gate. As he glanced in the direction whence the sound had come, he saw a white-clad figure advancing quickly along the path. His eyes were dim, and his spectacles were in a pocket of a vest which was hanging in the house, so he was unable to identify the visitor before she reached the bottom of the porch steps and addressed him.

"Is that you, Mr. Darwood?" asked a soft, feminine voice.

The old man, giving a little start, gripped the arms of his chair and leaned forward. A moment later, however, his form lost the rigidity which came to it as the words were spoken, and he nodded wearily. There was a slight quaver in his voice as he replied:

"Yes, Tilly, there ain't no one else to set out here when Mrs. Bartlett goes home to her young uns. What's them flowers you got?"

"Some tea roses dad forced a bit this year in his nursery. You used to like tea roses, Mr. Darwood, so I brought these around."

The old man hesitated, then he extended a hand toward the bunch of flowers the beautiful young woman held out to him. Tilly saw that the hand was shaking.

"For me, hey, gal?" Ezra murmured. "Won't ye set down a little spell?"

He reached for a chair, and pushed it clumsily toward her. He saw now that her face was very pale, and that

cold hand slipped between his calloused palms. He gripped it tightly.

Minute after minute passed, and the silence was broken only by the chirping of crickets and the sound of a cabinet organ which was accompanying the voices of several young people who were singing Methodist hymns in a little farmhouse down the road. Then the old man, gently stroking the soft, brown



"You used to like tea roses, Mr. Darwood, so I brought these around."

there was a strange look in her eyes. She laughed nervously.

"I'll sit here, Mr. Darwood," she said, as she seated herself at the head of the steps. Then, after a pause, she asked: "How's the garden coming on this year?"

Ezra's chair creaked as he moved it toward his visitor. As he leaned forward, with his elbows on his knees, his folded hands were near one of the young woman's shoulders.

"Purty well, my dear—purty well," he sighed.

A thrill passed over him as a slim,

hair which was coiled on the fair head that now was resting against one of his knees, said huskily:

"A hard man, ain't I?"

On the face which the young woman suddenly turned to him there was a startled, wondering expression. Each knew what occupied the thoughts of the other. It was a subject, however, of which neither had spoken for ten long years, and in this period this was Tilly's first visit to the cottage of old Ezra.

Tilly shook her head sadly, and looked again toward the gravel path. Then silence fell again.

Suddenly the young woman gave a little start, and tightened her grip on one of Ezra's hands. From the organ in the farmhouse down the road was issuing the prelude of an old camp-meeting air, and Tilly knew that the bent figure of Ezra Darwood had grown rigid. The hard, knotted hand she held was as cold as ice.

"It is his night," Tilly whispered hoarsely. "Everything in nature seems to breathe his name—his breath—his words! For ten years it has been the same. The last night in every May has been like this—clear and as beautiful as the night—the night Joe left us."

"Stop!" commanded Ezra huskily. "Must I be tellin' you, Tilly, at this late day, what the whole village knowed ten year ago this night, that I'll hear no one speak the black sheep's name to me again? It's——"

"Why should we be more cruel to his memory than others are?" exclaimed Tilly passionately. "Those who loved him less still speak of him with kindness and bear witness to the many good qualities he possessed, while we never speak of him at all. But, though his name never passes our lips, others know——"

"It's lies—lies, I tell you—lies!" the old man broke in fiercely. "I never think of him. I——"

The prelude on the distant organ was finished; then irregularly at first, but soon in perfect unison, the singers took up the words:

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out, o'er the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold."

In a hollow voice Ezra went on, speaking so loudly that the young woman no longer was able to hear the words of the hymn.

"He was a drunkard, a gambler, and purty nigh a pagan, gal," he said. "Aye, he was a black sheep through and through. But you never knowed the real reason he went away and never come back ag'in."

"Yes—yes," the young woman faltered faintly. "I know, but you do not."

It was I who bade him go, I who refused to listen to his promises, I who told him that, come what might, I hoped never to see his face again."

Ezra Darwood stiffened suddenly. As he drew back, his eyes grew wider, and he withdrew his hand from the slim, cold fingers that held it.

"You—you told him that—that, too, gal—you!" he exclaimed brokenly, in accents that were expressive of wonder and reproach.

Tilly tried to speak, but her voice was choked with sobs.

The moonlight glistened in the moisture that filled the old man's eyes, but his features were set and grim. There was a pause, then Ezra said:

"Waal, you were right, I reckon, gal—but—but, even when I cussed him, when I was searin' his soul with my words, when I was tellin' him to keep out of my sight forever—why, even then, Tilly, I kinder thought as how you, womanlike, might stick to him and find some way to sorter pull him through. You see, I knew more than you knew then, Tilly, and——"

"He told me all," Tilly whispered, as her fingers closed around the old man's hand again.

Ezra, leaning toward her, regarded her incredulously.

"All?" he murmured. "He told you that he had gambled away on hoss races all the money he had saved to marry you on, an' that I wouldn't help him out?"

"Yes—yes, he told me that."

Again the old man stroked her hair.

"It must 'a' hit him mighty hard—comin' from both of us at oncet, my gal," he muttered. "But, he bein' a black sheep, we was right, I reckon."

For several minutes the silence that fell was unbroken. The girl was sobbing quietly. The old man's wide eyes were staring at a distant hill. The singing in the farmhouse had ceased.

"An' you ain't heard from him in all these years?" Ezra asked at length, as his gaze fell to the bowed head beside his knee.

The head was shaken negatively.

"Then, Tilly, I—I reckon somethin'

went wrong—after he left here," said Ezra gloomily.

The young woman looked up quickly.

"You—you mean—" she faltered.

"All these ten years I've been thinkin' that you knowed somethin' more than come to me," the old man went on. "I calculated he might have writ to you—if he picked up a bit. I somehow hoped that he— Waal, I dunno, Tilly. I never thought of Joe dyin'; but if he's never writ to you—"

He stopped, and cleared his throat; then his gaze wandered to the distant hills.

A couple of minutes later the old man was suddenly conscious of the fact that his companion, having stiffened suddenly, was wiping her eyes.

"That's right, gal," he said, patting her head approvingly. "We'll have to brace up an' keep on forgettin' that black—"

"Here's Doctor Prentice coming in the gate," said Tilly, thus explaining her sudden movements.

Ezra peered in the direction indicated. He saw, approaching the house, a tall man, who was clad in a dark suit and who wore a Panama hat, with the brim well turned down in the front.

"What's he a-wantin' here to-night?" the old man grumbled.

Three or four paces from the foot of the porch steps the visitor halted. His down-turned brim shaded the upper part of his face as he surveyed the old man and the white-faced young woman who was sitting at his feet.

"Howdy, doc?" Ezra asked perfunctorily.

The visitor was silent. In another moment, Tilly, with a little cry, drew back and grasped one of the old man's knees. Ezra started, also; and, as he leaned forward, the visitor removed his hat and bowed gravely.

"May I sit down?" he asked.

Ezra, breathing heavily, did not answer. The visitor hesitated, then he moved deliberately to the other end of the porch steps, and there seated himself.

"The old place looks about the same," he said softly.

Ezra cleared his throat. His sinewy, old fingers closed around one of Tilly's hands with such force that she winced with pain.

"'Bout the same, Joe," he assented, in a shaking voice.

There was a pause, then the old man cleared his throat again.

"'Member Tommy, the toad?" he asked huskily.

The visitor nodded.

"Yes, dad," he replied.

"He went by a spell ago."

"Same Tommy?" the newcomer queried, with an accent of surprise.

"Yep. Time ain't changed him much."

Ezra now became conscious of the fact that Tilly was trembling violently. He saw that Joe was trying to look into her averted face.

"Been travelin' far?" the old man asked.

"Yes—from the Southwest. I just got East to-day."

"Been livin' in the West?"

"Yes."

The old man sighed. The three were looking at the shadowy hills. The heart of old Ezra was beating wildly, but his militant spirit of Puritanism was dominant, even in those moments. The son who had gone forth into the world as a scapegrace had returned a stranger. Had time changed him as little as it had changed the toad?

"I've been keepin' up the old farm," Ezra said, after a period of silence. "I bought Perley's medder three year ago. I got eighty acres now. You ain't been farmin' since you went from here, I s'pose."

"Yes—a bit. I've got some land out West."

"Waal, farmin' sorter runs in the family," Ezra sighed. "I kinder got the notion, though, as how you'd never quite take to it, Joe. Still, I reckoned that, if you ever did steady down, these here eighty acres—" He stopped suddenly, and something other than moonlight glinted in his eyes. Then, after a pause, he added, in a voice that had a little of the old-time rasp in it:



Three or four paces from the foot of the porch steps the visitor halted.

"But they ain't a-goin' to back no fast hosses, son."

"No, dad," Joe drawled gloomily.

His head was bowed, and his fingers were toying nervously with the brim of his swinging hat; but old Ezra saw that his gaze was resting on the pale face and drooping head of the young woman at the other side of the porch steps.

"How much of a farm have you got—down there in the Southwest?" Ezra asked, after a pause.

"Something over ninety thousand acres—in both ranches," Joe answered absently.

Ezra gave a little start, darted a quick, searching look at his brooding son, then settled back in his chair.

"Somethin' over ninety thousand, hey?" he muttered. "Don't you know?"

"It might be a hundred thousand by now, if Wilson succeeded in getting a tract he wrote to me about the other day," Joe answered.

"Who's Wilson?"

"My superintendent."

"Oh, you've got a superintendent, hey? You ain't got time to run the place yourself?"

"Well, other things have been keeping me pretty busy lately."

"Oh, you're stickin' closer to other things, and lettin' them ranches run themselves."

"The ranches aren't neglected, dad; but I've got a couple of banks, one in Houston and the other in Galveston, that—"

"Faro banks?"

Joe laughed mirthlessly.

"No—national," he said.

"Waal, a man what's follerin' hoss racin' ain't got no right to be savin' other peoples' money," declared Ezra, in an uncompromising voice.

"That's right," Joe muttered sententially.

"You're raisin' hosses on them ranches, I s'pose."

"Oh, yes."

"An' racin' 'em?"

Joe didn't answer. An expression of

grimness settled on his face, and his gaze fell to the graveled walk.

Ezra, stiffening, sat bolt upright in his chair.

"Waal, son, look here," he said; and there was a strident note in his tone. "You may own all the land between the Mississippi and the Pacific, an' you may be such an all-fired good banker that the whole U. S. A. may be a-givin' you mortgages on its fleet an' national cemeteries, an' the capitol, an' the White House; but if you're racing hosses, after all the sorrier you've brought to me an' this here gal that's been a-waitin' all these years for you to make a man of yourself; why, then——"

"Mr. Darwood, stop!" protested an agonized voice beside him, and Tilly grasped one of his hands. "In Heaven's name, you—you don't want everything to be as—as it was before!"

Choking down a sob, the trembling young woman hid her face against the old man's knee. The figure of the stern Puritan relaxed, and once more he settled back in his chair.

"Then let him tell about them hosses," he muttered doggedly. "What about them hosses, Joe?"

Moving deliberately, Joe laid his hat on the floor of the porch, then he thrust a hand into one of his pockets, from which he drew a fountain pen. Extending the pen to Ezra, he said quietly:

"There's my answer, dad."

The old man took the pen wonderingly, and asked:

"What's this got to do with it?"

"It was with that I signed the bill abolishing race-track gambling in Texas."

"You—you signed——" Ezra faltered, and stopped.

His son looked at him with an expression of mild surprise.

"Yes—as governor," he explained.

"They—they've been makin' you governor of Texas!" the old man stammered.

"Is it possible that you did not know?" his son asked incredulously. "I thought, perhaps——"

Ezra shook his head, and passed a hand over his bewildered eyes.

"I saw somethin' in the papers 'bout a feller named Darwood down that way; but I—I didn't even think to reckon as it might be you," he explained weakly. After a brief period of hesitation, he went on: "And yet the fact is, son, somethin' kept a-tellin' me—kept a-makin' me feel—well, I kinder thought as how your wool wasn't altogether black, and that mebbe you'd come back to me an' Tilly, an'——"

He stopped abruptly as his gaze rested again on the young woman who still was sitting at his feet, for a great fear gripped his heart, and a heavy mist seemed to shut him in. Leaning forward, he asked in quivering accents:

"Been marryin', Joe?"

"No," Joe answered gently. "All these years I have loved only one woman, and she is here."

The old man rose, and held out the pen to Tilly.

"Then, gal, I reckon this belongs to you," he muttered.

Hobbling across to where his son was sitting, Ezra bent over and took his hands. For several moments he held them without speaking, then he said:

"I guess, son, I'd better be drawin' some water from the well to—to wet down them tea roses Tilly jest brought over. See you later, Joe."

But, as he tottered off, rose after rose fell from his shaking hands, and, when he entered the old-fashioned parlor, he forgot that he had held them. With trembling fingers, he turned up the dimly burning wick of the lamp that stood on the center table. This done, he opened an old album to the photograph of a twelve-year-old boy. His chest heaved as, with brimming eyes, he regarded the picture long and earnestly; then, raising his head, he let his gaze rest on the portrait of a sweet-faced woman that hung on one of the walls.

"Yes, mother, you was right, after all," he murmured tremulously. "All these years them pictured eyes o' yours has been a-tellin' me the truth. Our little shaver's me an' you. They ain't been makin' no black sheep a governor of Texas."



DAN CUPID-AVIATOR

By FRANK X. FINNEGAN

Author of "The Early Bird,"
"Home Cooking," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

MISS MELISSA PARSONS sat on the porch of her trim little cottage in the gathering twilight, looked out over the rows of hollyhocks that bordered the carefully tended lawn, and sighed gently because she was sitting there alone. For more than fifteen years Miss Melissa had been sitting thus at twilight, whenever weather and season permitted, and sighing thus for the same reason. A comfortable armchair stood close to her low rocker; but, alas, its hospitable arms yawned idly for an occupant, and had beckoned unavailingly to the yeomanry of Middletown ever since Miss Melissa's father had passed to his reward, many years before.

Just why this undesirable condition of affairs existed it would be difficult even for the gossips of Middletown to explain. True, Miss Melissa was no longer in what might be called the first flush of youth, and had been a teacher in the district school for more years than she cared to count; but even these particulars, depressing though they were, furnished no real reason for her neglect by the chivalry of the neighborhood when it was minded to go-a-wooing.

In her early twenties, when she had been left alone with the trim little cottage to make her own fight against the world, Melissa Parsons probably averaged up very well with the belles of

Middletown in points of pulchritude, sweetness of disposition, girlish charm, and the other components popularly supposed to attract husbands as honey attracts flies; and in addition to all these assets she had her own bit of land and the trim little cottage. But as the years dragged by Miss Melissa found herself sitting alone in the twilight every evening until Middletown had made up its collective mind that Miss Melissa would sit there alone just as long as she was able to sit anywhere, and Miss Melissa herself had acquired the harmless habit of sighing gently over the situation.

On this particular summer evening it seemed especially hard to the little school-teacher that she should be all alone in the world. She had stowed away her dainty tea things after having her lonely cup of tea, as she had done so many, many evenings before, and slipped out on the vine-covered porch to have a last look at the quiet little scene while the day was dying—the white line of the road stretching away to the town, Mrs. Manning's well-kept garden of old-fashioned flowers almost directly across the way, the red bulk of Harlow's barn on the horizon, the haycocks in the neighboring fields.

But though these things filled the line of Miss Melissa's vision as she sat there with clasped hands resting in her lap, she saw none of them. Her thoughts



Her thoughts dwell upon the old, old problem—the empty chair beside her, the vacant place at her little table, the emptiness in her gentle heart.

dwelt upon the old, old problem which seemed no nearer a solution because of its insistent recurrence—the empty rocking-chair beside her, the vacant place at her little table, the emptiness in her gentle heart.

It was not the nature of Miss Melissa to complain, however. Hers was a spirit in which hope had never died, but had been gradually compounded with a patient resignation to the inscrutable workings of Providence until the hope barely peeped above the surface, and the resignation held large sway. It was this happy combination that prevented Miss Melissa from becoming a sour, discontented old maid, and kept her a sweet-faced, smiling schoolma'am of uncertain age, but of positive charm—this, and a deep-seated religious fervor that told her all things would come out right at last.

And it was the manifestation of this

blissful trust in the ultimate regulation from above of all mundane things along acceptable lines that framed her thoughts into a little prayer. She was not praying for a husband—no idea so unmaidenly and irreligious had ever crossed her placid mind—but her orison merely breathed the hope that whatever was for the best might happen in the matter of her matrimonial fate.

"Dear Lord," she said, "I am only a weak woman, and Thou knowest far better than I what is best for me. It may be that my spirit needs chastening, and therefore it has been Thy will that I

should live this solitary life. It may be that I would become proud and un-Christian if I had a husband—I leave all things in Thy hands. But if in Thy wisdom Thou shouldst see that it would be better for me to marry—"

Miss Melissa raised her eyes to the heavens at that period in her little prayer, and the aspiration was never concluded. Above her in the sky, careening over the corner of Harlow's barn like a tipsy dragon, she saw a huge white flying bird that sailed giddily toward her with terrifying swoops and dives, and a mighty purring, as though in anticipation it were enjoying the choice titbit it was about to snap up from the porch of the Parsons cottage and devour in one tremendous gulp.

Miss Melissa sprang to her feet with a weak little shriek of terror, but, instead of fleeing into the house for refuge, she stood fascinated for a few sec-

onds, watching the huge object approach. As it cleared the roof of Mrs. Manning's cottage in a wide lunge toward the earth, she saw that its great boxlike wings seemed to extend from the shoulders of a human being crouched between them and glaring at her madly in the fading light. Then, with a crash, the amazing vision struck the palings that guarded her flower garden, crumpled into a tangled mass of wood, steel, and canvas, and spilled a groaning man from its interior into Miss Melissa's choicest bed of geraniums.

The little school-teacher's terror fled instantly when she recognized she had nothing supernatural to deal with. While she was still shaken and startled by the sudden apparition from the skies, the spectacle in her dooryard was decidedly material, and she hastened to render first aid to the injured as best she could. Almost as soon as she reached the spot where the unexpected visitor had been tossed she was joined by Mrs. Manning, who had been alarmed by the crash, and hurried across the road to investigate.

"Why, it's Clem Struve!" exclaimed Mrs. Manning. "How on earth did he get here?"

A groan from Clem was the only answer, and Mrs. Manning turned to Miss Melissa for an explanation, wide-eyed with wonder.

"He—he came on that thing," ventured the school-teacher, pointing to the wreckage that drooped dismally against what remained of her fence. "I suppose it was an airship!"

"An airship!" echoed Mrs. Manning. "Land o' love, isn't that just like Clem Struve? Well, we've got to get him out of here," she went on briskly. "He ain't killed, anyhow. That's a blessing!"

Miss Melissa looked helplessly from the prostrate Clem, who was feebly trying to arise, to energetic Mrs. Manning, who seemed capable of converting herself into an emergency ambulance corps on the spot. Clem raised himself on his elbow, and fell back with a louder groan than he had thus far been capable of.

"Don't hurt yourself, Clem," cautioned Mrs. Manning. "Maybe something's broke. Just lay still there until I see if there ain't some menfolks around that can carry you some place. Where'll we take him?" she asked, turning suddenly upon Miss Melissa.

"Why, I suppose we'd better take him into my house—for the present," faltered the school-teacher.

"That's the very idea!" declared Mrs. Manning promptly. "I'd take him across to our house, but with the children and all I declare there isn't a bit of room."

Then she turned again to the fallen aviator, who was feebly clawing amid the wreckage for something that would aid him in getting to his feet.

"Do you think you kin get up, Clem?" she asked. "Where does it hurt you most?"

"It's my leg," moaned Struve.

Miss Melissa took a modest step backward. These negotiations were evidently safer in the hands of Mrs. Manning.

"It's prob'ly broke," said Mrs. Manning cheerfully. "Legs most always breaks when you get a fall like that. Land's sakes! I wonder where all the menfolks are?" she continued, staring up and down the empty roadway. "They're never around when you want 'em, and they're always pesterin' around when you want 'em out of the way. We've got to get this man into that house, Melissy," she added decisively.

"Maybe we could carry him between us," suggested Miss Parsons doubtfully.

"Yes, maybe we could," Mrs. Manning assented, looking the recumbent Clem over with an appraising eye. "He ain't very heavy. I know," she added suddenly, "when folks is hurt, and has to be carried, they always get a shutter. Ain't you never heard tell of bein' carried on a shutter, Melissy? We'll just take one of yours, and then we can manage it."

She started briskly toward one of the windows, when she was halted by a groan of protest from the patient.

"Don't put me on no shutter!" wailed

Clem. "You'll drop me sure! I've had enough bumps for one day."

Miss Melissa looked startled by this turn of affairs, but Mrs. Manning was accustomed to meeting emergencies. She came back from the window, and stood over Struve with her capable hands doubled on her aggressive hips.

"Clem Struve," she said, "you ain't got anything to say about this no more than if you was in a hospital and the doctors was goin' to cut your leg off. You've gone and got yourself all busted up with your flyin' machine, and now we've got to do the best we can with you until Doctor Burr gets here, and the best right now is a shutter!"

Saying which she stalked back to Miss Melissa's cottage, deftly unhinged one of the bright-green shutters, and carried it to where Clem lay watching her with an uneasy glance, while Miss Melissa fluttered about helplessly like an excited sparrow.

"I don't just know the reg'lar way of gettin' people on to these things," admitted Mrs. Manning, as she dropped the shutter on the grass beside Clem, "but it looks to me that the easiest way was to roll him over."

Clem groaned at the mere suggestion. "Don't roll me over!" he warned her. "My leg's liable to break right off!"

Mrs. Manning was on her knees in the grass beside him while he was putting up his feeble protest.

"Come on, Melissy," she urged, "don't pay no attention to him. Sick people don't never know what's good for 'em. We've got to get him onto that shutter."

Miss Melissa, quite carried away by the masterful manner of her resourceful neighbor, knelt beside her, and awaited instructions.

"I hope we won't hurt you very much," she ventured, when she found Clem's anxious gaze fixed upon her.

"Heave away!" moaned Clem, closing his eyes, and preparing for the worst. "I suppose it's got to be done."

"You push on his shoulder," ordered Mrs. Manning, "and I'll take his legs, 'cause they've got to be handled as though they was so much cut glass.

Maybe both of 'em's broke. Easy now, Melissy!"

Miss Melissa bent her strength to the unusual task, and with many groans and sighs Clem, who was slight of build, and by no means a heavyweight, rolled over on the shutter, and lay with his nose amid the slats. Miss Melissa surveyed their triumph anxiously.

"Shouldn't he be on his back?" she asked timorously.

"Not a bit of it!" declared Mrs. Manning. "Don't you see how easy it will be? When we get him into the house we'll roll him off onto a bed, and there he'll be! Now, then, the job is to get him into the house, Melissy. I'll take the head end—that's the heaviest—and you grab the feet end. I guess we can manage it, after all."

With many misgivings the little school-teacher seized her end of the shutter, with its moaning burden, while Mrs. Manning valorously tugged at the other end. Clem was lighter even than they had anticipated, and in a few moments they had staggered up the three steps to the open door, across the parlor, and into the best spare room, where Mrs. Manning's preconceived plan for disposing of the patient worked like a charm. Standing beside the bed, they tipped the shutter until Clem rolled off among the pillows, and the trick was done.

"Now, Melissy," advised the invaluable Mrs. Manning, when Miss Parsons began to wring her hands nervously, and look helplessly around for something to do, "you make a light, and I'll run home and send my Sammy for Doctor Burr. Then I'll have Willie run to Clem's house and tell his sister what's come to him, and I'll be right back to see what I can do."

"What are you goin' to tell my sister for?" demanded the suffering Clem. "Ain't I in trouble enough now? Maybe Doc Burr kin fix me up so's I kin go home this evenin'."

"Not if your leg's broke," announced Mrs. Manning, "and your sister ought to know the first thing, 'cause she'll be worritin' after you. She ain't been doin' for you all these years, and not

to be at your bedside when there's doctor's work on you, Clem."

"I might make a cup of tea," suggested Miss Melissa, who felt a mild panic coming on at the prospect of being left alone with her patient.

"That's a good idea," laughed Mrs. Manning, as she hurried to the door. "If Clem's leg is broke you'd better make boneset tea." And she disappeared in the gathering gloom with a laugh trailing back over her shoulder.

Miss Melissa lighted the lamps, and brought one into the spare room where Struve was moving uncomfortably on her spotless counterpane.

"I wish I could do something for you—Clem," she said.

They had been children together, but she found the name come unfamiliarly to her lips, so far apart had they drifted in latter years.

"There isn't anything you can do, Melissa," he said, "until the doctor has a look at me. It's my own fault—the blamed motor broke down just the way I was afraid it would."

"The motor?" she repeated wonderingly. She had a faint suspicion that Clem was beginning to rave.

"Yes—the motor on my aeroplane," he explained. "That's what made her come down that way—everything else was all right. I would have been fifty miles from here by now only for that motor. Julia told me I'd break my neck, and I guess I came near it."

"Did you make the—the machine yourself?" she asked, in awed surprise.

"Every bit of it!" declared Clem proudly.

"I got the plans

and description and all that out of a weekly paper. 'How to Make an Aeroplane for Fifteen Dollars,' was the piece that told about it, and there was full instructions. It was all easy enough except the motor. I got mine out of 'Lije Drummond's old motor boat that sunk on him last spring—paid him ten dollars for the whole outfit, and raised her myself, just to get the motor. Julia and all of 'em said I was a derved fool wastin' my money and my time on an airship, but I just decided I'd show 'em—and I will yet if I get a decent motor."

Mrs. Manning came bustling in while Clem was in the midst of his explanations, and Doctor Burr was almost on her heels. A cursory examination of the aviator's injuries was sufficient, and the old doctor pulled off his coat and opened his ominous-looking instrument case.

"Leg's broken, Clem," he announced.



"You're crazy! Clem Struve can't be moved off that bed for four weeks at least."

"Just what I thought when Sammy told me you'd been bumped out of a flyin' machine. Lucky I brought along plaster bandages and things to fix it."

Clem groaned, as much in anguish of spirit as in physical pain.

"Now, ain't that just my luck!" he exclaimed. "Flat on my back for the next month, with that sister of mine jawin' at me mornin', noon, and night, about flyin' machines, and no chance to get away from her! That's worse than the broken leg, doc!"

"Mrs. Patton certainly is eloquent when she puts her mind to it," admitted Doctor Burr, bringing rolls of bandages to light from the depths of his satchel, and preparing for work, "and I'm sure I'd never pick out her house as a rest cure, Clem. However, we've got to get this leg set the first thing."

Miss Melissa and Mrs. Manning left the field to the surgeon, and retired to the little parlor to discuss the bewildering events of the last half hour, and take a peep into the future, which seemed a whirling chaos to the perturbed school-teacher.

"I suppose his sister will want him took home," suggested Mrs. Manning, "but with a broken leg I don't see how it could be done very well. And, on the other hand, how's he goin' to camp down here on you for a month or so?"

"He's quite welcome, Mrs. Manning," urged Miss Melissa earnestly. "When a neighbor is hurt at your very doorstep you couldn't do less than take him in."

"That's all very well," protested Mrs. Manning, "but binding up a cut finger and looking after a broken leg are two different things, Melissy. Who's goin' to look after Clem all these weeks until he's able to move? Who's goin' to nurse him and wait on him when you're away at school all day?"

As though in answer to these embarrassing questions there was a tapping on the door at that moment, and when Miss Parsons opened it she found Clem's widowed sister, Mrs. Julia Patton, on the doorstep. Mrs. Patton might have posed for a statue of Indignation at the moment, had other conditions been propitious. Her very bonnet

strings seemed to bristle and quiver with suppressed emotion as she stared coldly at Miss Melissa, and beyond her into the parlor, as though she half expected to see her brother in the softest and most comfortable chair as the guest of the evening.

"Good evening, Mrs. Patton," ventured Miss Melissa. "Come right in."

Mrs. Patton came right in without further parley.

"I'm told my brother Clem is here," she began, "and that his legs are broken, or something of that sort."

"Only one leg, Mrs. Patton," corrected Mrs. Manning sweetly.

"How did he come to be brought here?" demanded Mrs. Patton suspiciously.

She seemed to have a dim notion that Miss Melissa might have tripped him in the dooryard, and broken his leg in order that he might occupy her spare bedroom during his illness.

"Why, this is where he was hurt," explained Miss Melissa gently. "His airship came down on my fence, and he was thrown out into the yard. Of course we carried him into the house the first thing, and Doctor Burr says his leg is broken."

Mrs. Patton revolved this succinct statement in her mind a few moments while she glared at the two women as though trying to determine which of them was the more culpable in the scheme for kidnaping her brother.

"You might have seen the ruins of his flyin' machine piled up all over the yard as you came in," suggested Mrs. Manning. "It's a mercy it wasn't his neck instead of his leg that was broke."

"Well, whatever is broken, he's got no business here," declared Mrs. Patton decidedly, "and he'll have to be packed home right away. I've been lookin' after him for more'n twenty years now, and I guess it won't be necessary to turn him over to the neighbors while his leg is mendin'. I'll go get Joel Carter's wagon, and a couple o' men with Joel can move him up to our place."

The door of the spare room had quietly opened while Mrs. Patton was mak-

ing her announcement, and Doctor Burr, his sleeves rolled to the elbows, and his collar laid aside, stepped out and listened with a gathering frown.

"What's that?" he roared, so suddenly that the three women jumped, and Mrs. Patton emitted a little shriek of terror. "Are you talking about moving this man, with a broken leg done up in a plaster cast? You're crazy! Clem Struve can't be moved off that bed for four weeks at least—maybe five or six. I've just been settin' that broken bone, and it's a pretty bad smash, let me tell you! When I get through with him he'll be trussed up so he can't move an eyelash, and anybody that tries to pack him on a wagon and jounce him a couple of miles over the roads will answer to me!"

The indignant doctor glared at Mrs. Patton, and she returned his look defiantly, while poor little Miss Melissa wrung her hands nervously, and tried a conciliatory smile on Clem's irate sister. That determined lady seized the dilemma by both horns and promptly won the first fall.

"Very well!" she announced, giving the bow of her bonnet strings a vicious tug. "Then I stay here, too! If my brother is to be kept in this house by force when he's flat on his back, and helpless, I'll stay by him and take care of him!"

Mrs. Manning greeted this solution of the problem with a radiant smile, while the amazed Melissa dropped feebly into a chair and stared miserably at the trio.

"That's the very idea, Melissy!" exclaimed Mrs. Manning. "That just settles things nicely! Mrs. Patton will stay here and nurse her poor brother, of course, and I'm sure they won't interfere with you much. We were just wondering, when you came in," she continued, turning to the austere visitor, "what could be done about the nursing and all that—I thought prob'ly you folks would have to get somebody."

"Not at all necessary," snapped Mrs. Patton. "I'm here, and I'll do it!"

"I'm sure you're very welcome," faltered Miss Melissa, "and there's plenty of room."

Doctor Burr looked rapidly from one to another of the three women, and moved toward the door beyond which Clem awaited his ministrations.

"Well, I don't care who nurses him," he announced. "Fix that up among yourselves. But he won't be moved until that leg is well—not if I have to sit here and watch him myself!"

With which threat he dived into the bedroom, and closed the door behind him. Mrs. Patton had removed her bonnet and placed it on the center table as an additional decoration for the plush photograph album. When the doctor disappeared she drew a roomy chair to the table, and settled herself in it comfortably.

"I'll stay and watch with Clem to-night," she announced, "and to-morrow I'll go home and get my own tea. I'm quite sure you don't use the only kind I drink."

Mrs. Manning, satisfied that the situation was ideal, saw no immediate use for her services, and gracefully retired.

"I'll be running home, Melissy," she said. "You'll be all right now, with Mrs. Patton here. Good night, Mrs. Patton. I hope Clem gets around in no time."

And when the door closed behind her Miss Melissa realized, though with a sinking heart, that she was not sitting alone by her evening lamp as she had been so many years.

For the next month Mrs. Patton ruled the ordinarily placid domicile of the little schoolma'am with all the skill, determination, and autocracy of a commanding general in a captured city, while Miss Melissa, thoroughly subjugated, devoted all of her time outside school hours to the service of the invalid. And as for Clem, who had never before enjoyed the luxury of a long illness, he soon discovered that he was in paradise during the hours that Miss Melissa waited upon him, and in purgatory while his austere sister was on duty. Miss Melissa made him dainty custards and surprising broths and cakes; Mrs. Patton lectured him unceasingly upon the supreme folly of aviation in particular and invention in general,



"What prayer?" asked Clem, clasping her closer.

laying especial stress upon an experience he had some years before with a homemade burglar trap which had captured Mrs. Patton herself, and required the services of a blacksmith for its removal.

Miss Melissa whiled away the evening hours, while Mrs. Patton slept, in reading aloud selections from a school of lively fiction and adventure to which Clem had hitherto been a stranger, or in sympathetic inquiry concerning the inventions to which he had devoted so much of his time. Mrs. Patton was not given to reading aloud, for which Clem was duly grateful, as he heard more than enough of her rasping voice, and preferred to have her nodding over a book while he tried to figure out for the thousandth time why 'Life Drummond's motor, which had done fairly well in a boat, had failed in an aeroplane.

He watched Melissa moving deftly and noiselessly about the little house, accomplishing marvels in her quiet way, with never a ruffle of her temper, never a tone of her voice raised a note above its normal pitch, and he began to have some dim idea of what it would mean to live in such an atmosphere; he even found himself vaguely wondering how it would seem to live always in that very house.

Nor was all the discovery on Clem's side of the line. Miss Melissa, after the novelty of the situation had worn off, and things had settled into a groove with Mrs. Patton's guiding hand at the helm, discovered that she looked forward to her evening chats with Clem more and more eagerly. He seemed to fill a place in her existence that had long been vacant; a sympathetic spirit had at last appeared to whom the heart-hungry little teacher found it easy to confide the hopes and dreams, the beliefs and the aspirations of her lonely life. And to her delight and ever-growing amazement she found more real worth and sympathetic understanding beneath Clem's rough exterior than she had ever dreamed possible.

"Julia didn't ever understand me," he confided to Miss Melissa one evening, when long-drawn bass notes from the front bedroom betokened that Mrs. Patton was sleeping the sleep of the weary. "She never could see why I didn't take to farmin', the same as my father did, and the same as Ezra Patton did—her husband that was, you know. She didn't ever seem to realize that there's all sorts of people in the world, Melissa, and that they can't all be farmers—no more than all the horses can be draft horses. Some of 'em's cut out for racin', you know."

"I know," sighed Miss Melissa, "and

some of them try to be race horses for a while, and then have to drift back to the farm."

"And I'll tell you another thing," volunteered Clem, "I didn't ever know anything about womenfolks until—until I came here and saw you, Melissy. I never was very close to any woman except Julia, and I thought they was all like her—judgin' from what I saw at home, and what the boys sort of joked around about the married men. I thought all womenfolks was naggin', and pesterin', and fussin' all the time because a fellow cluttered up the house, or because he didn't do the kind of work she thought he ought to do, or because—well, because something or other, anyhow. I didn't ever believe womenfolks could go around so soft and easy as—as you do, and read to a fellow out of storybooks, and—and cook them things you've been feedin' me. It—it seems sort o' wonderful to me, Melissy!"

"Does it, Clement?" asked the little school-teacher in a happy whisper. "Oh, I'm glad to hear that!"

And thus, as the days dragged on into weeks, a wonderful little romance budded and blossomed beneath the suspicious nose and the watchful eyes of Mrs. Julia Patton, who was firm in the belief that she had the situation well in hand, and that no artful, scheming minx of a schoolma'am could pull the wool over her eyes—not while she was looking at her, leastways.

Came the time when Doctor Burr, after various tests, and examinations, and thumps, and pulls, announced that Clem's leg was as good as new; that he could go home as soon as he wanted to, and start building another airship.

Clem heard the official pronouncement with mingled emotions. He was glad to be rid of the plaster cast, and the inactivity of being bedridden, and all that—but he shivered with apprehension as he looked forward to his release from the tender care of Miss Melissa and his return to the old régime under the command of Mrs. Patton. Being of a progressive turn of mind, as evidenced by his invention of a burglar trap and an

aéroplane, Mr. Struve decided to put his fate to the test before weakly returning to the domination of the masterful Julia.

It was the evening that had been fixed upon by Mrs. Patton for their departure to the Patton domicile, and that aggressive woman had gone on in advance to air out the place, leaving strict injunctions with Clem to be ready for the start when she returned. He was standing in the little parlor close to the window, looking out upon the placid scene which was spread before Miss Melissa that eventful evening when he and his crazy aéroplane came sailing over Harlow's old barn, and the little teacher was soberly tying up a package of his belongings that he was to carry.

"Melissy," he said, after a long pause, "I don't want to go home!"

"Why, Clem!" she gasped. "Whatever are you saying?"

"Do you—do you want me to go?" he went on, taking a careful step nearer on his newly repaired leg.

Miss Melissa dropped the string, took one frightened glance at Clem, and looked down very quickly.

"Why—you've—you've got to go, Clem," she stammered.

"I don't, either!" he roared. "I want to stay here—with you—always!" went on the aeronaut, reaching out for the little woman and finding her with ridiculous ease. "Won't you let me, Melissy?"

Miss Melissa was perfectly aware that the proper thing to do was to struggle indignantly from his grasp, and rush out of the room. But she didn't. Instead she slowly sank back into Clem's awkward embrace, and nestled against his coat lapel.

"Oh, Clement!" she sighed. "Isn't it wonderful? It seems almost like you came down from the sky that night in answer to my prayer!"

"What prayer?" asked Clem, clasping her closer, and glancing through the window in some anxiety to see whether his sister was coming.

"Never mind now," Miss Melissa murmured comfortably. "I'll tell you some other time!"

Cosmetics and Perfumes

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

WHAT cosmetics are to the face, wit is to the temper," said a famous British poet, novelist, and philosopher. Cosmetics have been used for all time, in all ages, among every class and condition of people; indeed, like perfumes, their origin is lost in remote antiquity.

Before the days of modern chemistry and practical pharmacy, these potential aids toward the improvement and beautifying of our bodies were not within the reach of the masses; their costliness prohibited their universal use; but to-day every one can manufacture such creams and lotions as are required to suit their individual needs.

Of course, the markets are flooded with preparations of every sort, but the ingredients, except in rare cases, where scents of almost priceless value are used, are all more or less the same, and, with a little patience, a little experience, cosmetics of delightful freshness, purity, and variety can easily be made at home. Then, too, nature has given us some wonderful firsthand aids to beauty, if we only know how to make use of them.

Our great-grandmothers were skilled in this art, as they were in so many things that an artificial civilization has taken out of the hands of women, and returned to them in the form of a fourth-grade article. Take, for example, the strawberry and the beet, the juice of which were used by the charming ladies of "ye olden times" for delicately tinting the skin. Unless used in their fresh state, they are very unstable, and it is pretty safe to say that while a marketed rouge may be labeled one thing, it is quite sure to contain an aniline dye, or, what is not quite so bad, to be colored with cochineal, the tiny insect from which pure carmine is secured. Modern chemistry has given us

the astonishing aniline dyes, which accounts for the bewildering beauty and riot of color in dress materials to-day; but these dyes, procured chemically from coal tar, can scarcely be used with impunity upon so delicate a fabric as the skin.

The following is a very old recipe for making beet rouge: Pound several ruby-red beets in a mortar, then press through a fine sieve or fruit strainer. To one ounce of beet juice, add one-half ounce of alcohol; bottle, and apply to the cheeks and lips with absorbent cotton.

The humblest meals and vegetables, too, afford the average woman reliable and inexpensive methods of preserving her good looks, if she possesses the wish to make use of these lowly agents. Cornmeal and oatmeal retain heat for a great length of time; when mixed with very hot water and applied to the face and neck as poultices, they draw out impurities, and make very valuable bleaching masks, especially if lemon juice or peroxide of hydrogen is added. This is a far better method of steaming the face than the application of hot towels, local vapor baths, et cetera, leaving it as velvety and delicately tinted as a rose leaf.

The home manufacture of creams and lotions requires a little experience before one knows how to buy, what to discard, what is staple, the quantities it is safe to indulge in, and so forth. After a few failures, these preliminaries are mastered, and quite a little laboratory is formed, where, with mortar and pestle, distilling flask and water bath, a diversity of valuable and inexpensive beauty aids can readily be made by—Every-woman.

Perhaps a little advice before giving explicit directions for the manufacture of everyday cosmetics will be helpful.

Powders must be sieved until perfectly smooth, lotions must be shaken until thoroughly mixed, bottles always tightly corked. Creams should be firm when not in use, smooth and yielding when applied to the skin. Drugs should be kept in a moderately cool place. It is well to put all lotions and the like in sprinkler-stoppered bottles; all creams in screw-top jars. Everything should be properly marked with indelible ink on regular labels.

White wax, green soap, castile soap, borax, vaseline, zinc oxide can be purchased by the pound, and will keep a long time. Alcohol cologne, spirits of camphor, tincture of cantharides, benzoin, glycerin keep a long time. Rose, elder flower, orange-flower water are unstable, and it is best to purchase these as one needs them.

In mixing creams, all the fats are melted together first, the liquids are slowly added, the mass being constantly beaten to prevent the oils and water from separating. Perfume is added when the cream is nearly cold, otherwise much of the scent is lost. In making cosmetics never submit the ingredients to a high temperature; they require only a gentle heat sufficient to melt and blend the oils, et cetera, et cetera. This is a detail of first importance.

CUCUMBER COLD CREAM.

Oil of almonds.....	2 pints
Green oil	2 ounces
Cucumber juice	2 pints
White wax	2 ounces
Spermaceti	2 ounces
Cucumber essence	4 ounces

Much has been said in these papers of the great value of cucumber as a skin bleach and beautifier. The above formula is a renowned one, and can seldom be procured except from foreign makers at fabulous prices. Choose large, ripe cucumbers, cut them up, skin and all, in fine pieces, and mash in a bowl to a soft mass; place this in a clean jelly bag, and squeeze out all the juice. The aroma of the cucumber is destroyed

by heat and manipulation to a certain extent, therefore as much thinly sliced cucumber as two ounces of olive oil will take up is placed to one side for twenty-four hours; this oil is then filtered, and more cucumber sliced into it for another twenty-four hours, when it is again filtered and added to the cold cream. This filtered olive oil constitutes the green oil mentioned in the formula.

The fats are gently heated, and while cooling are beaten thoroughly while the cucumber juice is slowly added; when quite cool

the green oil is beaten in, and lastly the essence is carefully incorporated.

A simpler cold cream, and one very easily prepared, is the following:

Spermaceti	3 ounces
White wax	1 ounce
Oil of almonds.....	8 ounces
Borax	½ ounce
Glycerin	2 ounces
Rose water	2 ounces
Oil of rose.....	10 minims
Extract of jasmine.....	½ ounce

Mix the wax, oil of almonds, and spermaceti, and melt at a low heat. Dissolve the borax in the glycerin and rose water previously mixed. Pour this



Cucumber, celebrated as a skin bleach and beautifier.

solution gradually and with constant stirring into the melted mixture until the product becomes snow white, then add the perfume.

Now, some prefer using emulsions and milky lotions in place of creams. *Lanoline Milk* is one of the most superior, and is prepared most simply by rubbing up 15 grains of borax with 150 grains of lanolin, and gradually adding 25 drams of orange-flower water.

Orange-flower water is also very simple to make. Take three or four drops of a fine quality of oil of neroli petals, and drop them on a piece of filter paper three inches square. Put the paper in a quart bottle, pour into it four ounces of warm, distilled water at a temperature of about 100 degrees F., and shake it well for a couple of minutes; then add warm distilled water to the amount of a pint; shake the bottle until its contents become cold. Lastly, filter. For perfumery, add two ounces of rose water to the pint of filtrate.



Choose ruby-red beets.

Formulas for making celebrated rose emulsion, honey balm, glycerin creams, jellies, pastes, et cetera, et cetera, will gladly be furnished on application. A simple but excellent lotion to whiten the skin, preserving its beauty and freshness, contains:

Tincture of benzoin.....	2 ounces
Tincture of vanilla.....	2 drams
Rose water—triple.....	1½ pints

First thoroughly mix the tinctures—no heating—then slowly, drop by drop, to prevent curdling, and shaking all the while, add the rose water; a milky emulsion results if carefully made. This lotion is applied to the skin after a cream has been used.

Rose water is so extensively used that it may be well to give a formula for making it at home. Genuine "triple" waters are for the most part imported. The perfumer's art has not been developed here, nor does our climate impart to flowers the exquisite and lasting fragrance found in exotic blooms.

How to make inexpensive rose water:

Oil of rose.....	1 pint
Carbonate of magnesium.....	20 grains
Warm distilled water.....	8 drops

Rub the oil of rose with the carbonate of magnesium, slowly add the water, and filter.

A shampoo easily prepared, and very inexpensive, is made by scraping a cake of pure castile soap into a quart of boiling water. This makes a soapy jelly, to which other ingredients can readily be added as needed—a pinch of borax or a teaspoonful of ammonia when the hair is particularly oily or has been neglected or is unusually soiled; or to as much of the mixture as will be required for one shampoo a raw egg or a pinch of bicarbonate of soda may be added.

Hair lotions can be made at home at little cost, and to the general satisfaction of every member of the family. A famous jaborandi tonic for scant and falling hair consists of:

Jaborandi leaves..... $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce
 Tincture of cinchona..... 3 ounces
 Tincture of arnica..... 3 ounces
 Tincture of cantharides.... 1 dram

Macerate the jaborandi leaves in the tinctures of cinchona and arnica for ten days, then filter and add the cantharides.

This is applied to the scalp with a dropper every night, and rubbed in for ten minutes.

Another hair tonic for general use, and in popular demand as covering the everyday needs of those who habitually groom themselves carefully, is the following:

Ammonia water..... 2 drams
 Sulphate of quinine.....20 grains
 Powdered borax..... $\frac{1}{2}$ dram
 Compound tincture of cinchona
 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce

Bay rum, enough to make, all told, four ounces. To one ounce of bay rum add the quinine and the borax, and then add another ounce of the bay rum; gradually add the ammonia, then enough bay rum to make the four ounces; finally filter. Of course, this makes only four ounces, and if larger amounts for family use are required, one needs only to increase each item ten or twenty times to secure a larger quantity.

The tonic properties contained in many toilet waters act most beneficially on the skin beside being very refreshing. They can be easily and inexpensively prepared at home. The essential oils and triple extracts combined with rectified spirits form the foundation of even the most highly priced toilet waters:

Extract of mignonette..... $\frac{1}{2}$ pint
 Extract of cassia.....2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces
 Tincture of orris root.....2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces
 Tincture of tonquin.....1 ounce
 Tincture of benzoin.....1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces
 Triple rose water.....2 ounces

All scented waters are improved by standing for a month or longer. After this mixture is several weeks old, it can be diluted to any strength desired by adding rectified spirits. It is well to pour as much of the liquid as one wishes to dilute into another bottle, allowing



Put the powdered orris root through a sieve.

the other to remain for future use and to "age."

Perfumes! This exquisite theme is intimately associated with the history and progress of the human race. Perfumes were first employed as incense, and the ignorant still believe that the use of incense at sacrificial rites was for the purpose of concealing the odor of burning flesh. This is not the case; it had a symbolical meaning; it typified prayer. Noah offered up his gratitude in aromatic woods and gums. It cannot be doubted, either, that the antiseptic properties of these balsamic and fragrant resins and gums were known to the ancients, and that their use had a double purpose; the purification of the multitude as well as the wafting heavenward of sweet odors with prayers of thanksgiving.

The Egyptians, whose history dates back to the dawn of time, developed an amazing grandeur in religious rites, and were known to have employed perfumes

as early as the fourth dynasty, or forty centuries before Christ.

Considered from a hygienic point of view, perfumes possess much value; they not only mask offensive odors, but they act as true antiseptics and deodorants. An old book records that the "Hebrews seasoned their meat with spice; with it they imparted what flavor they wished to their wines, perfumed their women, fumigated their beds and clothing, and emblamed their dead."

While this method of fumigating one's belongings with aromatic spices antedates the birth of our civilization by many centuries, it has recently come into vogue among us, and is heralded as being "quite new." These scented powders and Egyptian pastilles are procurable at the best shops, and their method of use is very simple. The powder or pastille is placed on a tin plate, ignited, and laid on the floor of the wardrobe containing one's clothing; the doors are then closed, and the contents become impregnated with the fumes arising from the burning incense. If a more delicate fragrance is desired, any favorite alcoholic extract can be burned in the same manner. Care must be taken not to use too heavy a scent, as the charm of perfume for personal application lies in its illusiveness; and in fumigating clothing with alcoholic extracts one must remember that flames are apt to flare up and ignite dainty finery, whereas gums, resins, spices, powders, and the like give rise only to smoldering fumes.

In Paris professional perfumers make a business of scenting the entire belongings of their patrons by this method of fumigation, thus imparting to everything one possesses an individual odor that carries with it an indescribable charm. Precisely the same thing can be accomplished at a minimum expenditure by means of sachet powders, tied in little bags and distributed through one's wardrobe, laid in bureau and chiffonier drawers, glove boxes, and cases containing "the ribbons and laces that

set off the faces of pretty young sweet-hearts and wives."

Of course, the same sachet powder must be used throughout, otherwise all sense of individuality is lost. The simplest and faintest perfume consists of powdered orris root. It is not very lasting, and can be strengthened by adding an essential oil; rose, violet, heliotrope, or whatever one's taste prefers. A synthetic preparation—that is, one made chemically—is now being largely used in place of violet. It is called ionone, and cannot be distinguished from the genuine odor. Here is a formula for violet sachet:

Ground orris.....	12 ounces
Benzoin	4 ounces
Spirit of almond.....	8 drops
Spirit of ionone (10 per cent)....	1 dram

Contuse the benzoin in a mortar to coarse powder, triturate the two spirits intimately with a small portion of the powdered orris, then mix all the ingredients together. This makes an inexpensive and lasting sachet powder.

A novelty recently brought to this country, and sold under the names of "Frozen Perfume," and "Everlasting Sachet," is prepared by melting paraffin over a water bath, adding odorous substances when nearly cool, and pouring it in small molds to form tablets.

The following two formulas may be employed in preparing them, each mixture given being sufficient for four ounces of paraffin:

No. 1.

Oil of bergamot.....	2 drams
Oil of lavender flowers.....	2 drams
Oil of clove.....	1 dram
Oil of rose geranium.....	20 minims
Vanillin	10 grains

No. 2.

Oil of bergamot.....	4 drams
Oil of lemon.....	1 dram
Oil of orange.....	1 dram
Oil of neroli.....	30 minims
Oil of rose geranium.....	20 minims
Oil of rosemary.....	20 minims
Oil of lavender flowers.....	20 minims

Their use is the same as that of sachet bags.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

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BUILDINGS
OCCUPIED ENTIRELY BY THE I. C. S.



The Business of This Place is to Raise Salaries

That sounds queer, doesn't it? And yet there is such a place in reality—*The International Correspondence Schools*, of Scranton, Pa., an institution the entire business of which is to raise not merely salaries—but *your salary*.

To achieve that purpose the I. C. S. has a working capital of many millions of dollars, owns and occupies three large buildings, covering seven acres of floor space, and employs 3000 trained people, all of whom have one object in view—to make it easy for you and all poorly-paid men to earn more. Truly then—the *business of this place is to raise salaries*.

Every month an average of 400 I. C. S. students *voluntarily* report increased salaries. In 1911 over 5000 students so reported. These students live in every section. Right in their own homes, at their present work, the I. C. S. *goes to them*, trains them to advance in their chosen line, or to profitably change to a more congenial occupation.

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Here is all you have to do. From the list in the attached coupon select the position you prefer, and mark and mail the coupon today. It costs you nothing but the stamp to learn how the I. C. S. can raise *your salary*.

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Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

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Electric Wireman
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Refrigeration Engineer
Civil Engineer
Surveyor
Mine Superintendent
Metal Mining
Locomotive Fireman & Eng.
Stationary Engineer
Textile Manufacturing
Gas Engineer
Automobile Running

Civil Service
Railway Mail Clerk
Bookkeeping
Stenography & Typewriting
Window Trimming
Show Card Writing
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Advertising
Salesman
Commercial Illustrating
Industrial Designing
Commercial Law
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as well as a charming love story, seasoned with mystery and surprise, are some of the things that go to make up

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Smith's Magazine

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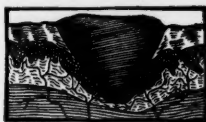
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And that form of home surgery is dangerous. A slip of the blade means infection. And that means blood poison, sometimes.

A chemist has discovered a way to end corns. This discovery is embodied in our B & B wax—the heart of a Blue-jay plaster.

Apply this little plaster and the pain ends at once. Then this B & B wax gently loosens

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No pain, no soreness. You completely forget the corn.

There is no other way to do this. That is why Blue-jay is the only treatment used by folks who know.

It has removed already fifty million corns. Let it deal with yours.



- A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.
- B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.
- C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.
- D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

Blue-jay Corn Plaster

Sold by Druggists—15c and 25c per package

(160)

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1912 1913
ANNOUNCEMENT

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**Around
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Sailing from New York, October 19, 1912. From San Francisco, February 6, 1913, by Steamship *Cleveland* (17,000 Tons), duration 110 days, cost \$650 up, including all necessary expenses aboard and ashore, railway, hotel, shore excursions, guide fees, etc.

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20,000 mile cruise to **SOUTH AMERICA**.

Nile service by superb steamers of the Hamburg and Anglo-American Nile Co.

Weekly cruises to Jamaica and Panama Canal on large "Prinz" Steamers.

Hamburg-American Line
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LOVELINESS**
of Skin and Hair



Enhanced by
**CUTICURA
SOAP**

Used daily, assisted by occasional gentle applications of Cuticura Ointment.



Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold everywhere. For sample of each, with 32-p. book, free, address "Cuticura," Dept. 133, Boston.

TENDER-FACED MEN

Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick, 25c. Makes shaving a pleasure instead of a torture. Liberal sample free.

If you're going away

It's as necessary as a trunk

If you're going to stay home

It's a vacation in itself

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MAGAZINE

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SEND YOUR NAME



We will send you full instructions how to organize a successful band. Lots of money and fun; this is campaign year. Easy payments accepted on instruments.

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I TRUST YOU TEN DAYS. SEND NO MONEY. \$2 Hair Switch Sent on Approval. Choice of Natural wavy or straight hair. Send a one of your hair, and I will mail a \$2 hair short clean fine human hair switch to match. If you find it the largest refund \$2 in ten days, or sell it and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shades a little more. Include 6c postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade switches, pompadours, wigs, tufts, etc. Women wanted to sell my hair & cut.

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Discouraged About Your Complexion?

Cosmetics only make it worse and do not hide the pimples, freckles, black-heads or red spots on face or nose.

Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Waters will purify your blood, cleanse and beautify the skin, and give you a fresh and spotless complexion.

Use these absolutely safe and harmless wafers for 30 days and then let your mirror praise the most wonderful beautifier of the complexion and figure known to the medical profession. Used by Beautiful Women for 27 years.

\$1.00 per Box. (Full 30 day treatment.)

We guarantee each freshly packed and of full strength, only when boxes have Blue Wrapper bearing our printed guarantee. Sold by all reliable druggists or sent by mail prepaid in plain cover from **RICHARD FINK CO., Dept. 54, 415 Broadway, New York City**

Send 10c. in stamps for sample box.

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Send for FREE Catalog!

showing wonderful White Valley Gems in Rings (Ladies' or Gentlemen's), Scarf Pins, Studs, Brooches, Necklaces, Cuff Buttons, Lockets, Earrings—100 different articles and styles.

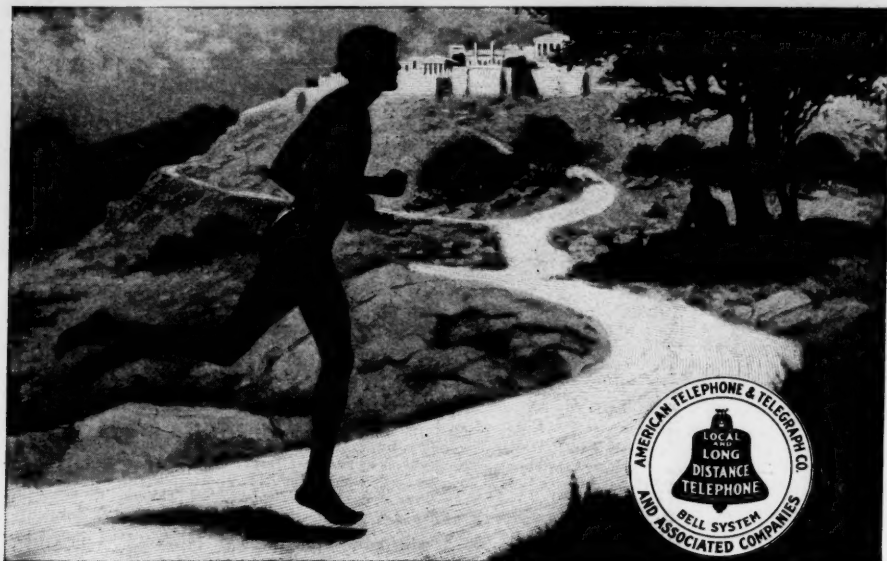
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14 K. solid gold mountings. 25-year Guaranty Certificate with each gem. Ring measure sent with catalog. Will send any article in book U. O. D.—express prepaid—subject to examination—or by registered mail on receipt of price. Money refunded if not satisfactory.

WHITE VALLEY GEM CO.
599 Sals Bldg. Indianapolis, Ind.

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Runners trained to perfection composed the courier service for the transmission of messages in olden times. But the service was so costly it could be used only in the interest of rulers on occasions of utmost importance.

The Royal messenger of ancient times has given way to the democratic telephone of to-day. Cities, one hundred or even two thousand miles apart, are connected in a few seconds, so that message and answer follow one another as if two persons were talking in the same room.

This instantaneous telephone service not only meets the needs of the State in great emergencies, but it meets the daily needs of millions of the plain people. There can be no quicker service than that which is everywhere at the command of the humblest day laborer.

Inventors have made possible communication by telephone service. The Bell System, by connecting seven million people together, has made telephone service so inexpensive that it is used twenty-five million times a day.

Captains of war and industry might, at great expense, establish their own exclusive telephone lines, but in order that any person having a telephone may talk with any other person having a telephone, there must be One System, One Policy and Universal Service.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

Every Bell Telephone is the Center of the System

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



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"The Crowning Attribute of Lovely Woman is Cleanliness."



A woman's personal satisfaction in looking charming and dainty is doubled when she knows everything about her is exquisitely clean.

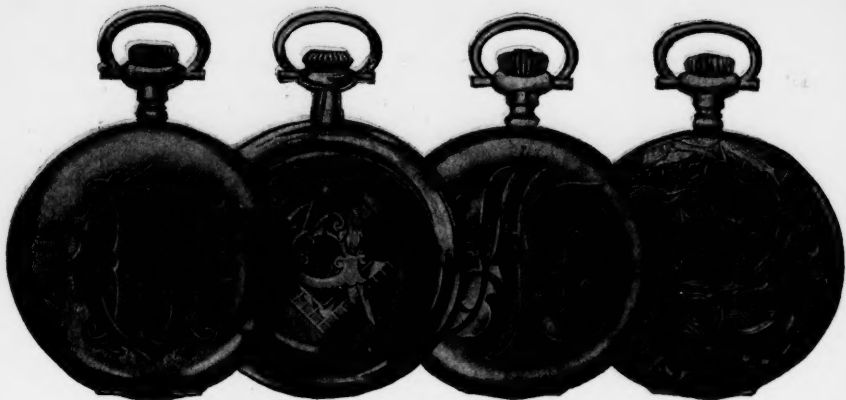
NAIAD DRESS SHIELDS

are thoroughly hygienic and healthful to the most delicate skin; are absolutely free from rubber, with its disagreeable odor; can be easily and quickly STERILIZED by immersing in boiling water for a few seconds only. They are preferred by well-gowned women of refined taste.

At stores or sample pair on receipt of 25c. Every pair guaranteed.

A handsome colored reproduction of this beautiful Coles Phillips drawing on heavy paper 10 x 12 sent for 10c. No advertising.

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NEWEST STYLES IN WATCH CASES—MONOGRAMS AND EMBLEMS

In Our Special 25-Year GOLD STRATA Cases.

Write for ANTI-TRUST Watch Book

See coupon below for explanation of the most **STARTLING** offer in the history of the watch business

HERE is your opportunity!—If you ever expect to own a high class watch write today for booklet explaining this **unprecedented offer.**

Read: It has been decided to make the fight on *trust methods* a fight to the finish. The necessity of throwing off the tightening shackles of trust methods is now admitted. Hence *this offer* to fight the trust we offer direct to the public. Your choice from a line of highest grade watches at the same price, the exact price that even the wholesale jeweler must pay. You get your watch to the penny at the exact price that we have been asking the biggest wholesale jeweler. *Take your choice* of the watch you want as per our booklet and help us fight the watch trust method to a standstill.

Watches adjusted to temperature, adjusted to positions, adjusted to isochronism, in short the world's first watches just now on the rock bottom price offer.

Anti-Trust Book SENT ON REQUEST

This book explains the unfair methods of the watch trust, not *illegal* methods, but very unfair to you and to the trade. Don't delay—write today—now.

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Now, then, if you have been thinking of getting a thoroughly high-class watch at some later time don't wait but write for this booklet **RIGHT NOW**—today.

In order to fight the trust methods still more quickly we offer terms of **\$2.50 a month** of these same rock bottom prices; so that everybody who sees this offer will accept **AT ONCE.**

IN connection with this great anti-trust offer on watches we are showing some beautiful novelties in cases. Most especially the magnificent new style ribbon and block monograms. Imagine your watch engraved with your initials. The styles above are a few of the 50 selected styles shown in our catalogue.

MONOGRAMS engraved at above cost from \$2.50 to \$3.50, sometimes more at a jeweler's. But in connection with our anti-trust price offer we are engraving monograms at 50c each, French and dragons \$1.00, etc. Write for catalog to get details. The movements in these watches are guaranteed the best, equal or superior to those of watches regularly sold at three times the price by trust goods dealers—yes three times the price. Every movement is

Adjusted to Isochronism A careful adjustment, so that the speed of a watch, when it is fully wound up, is the same when it is almost run down.

Adjusted to Temperature The watch is put into a refrigerator and run for twenty-four hours, then it is put into an oven of 100 degrees temperature and run for twenty-four hours then it is run in normal temperature for twenty-four hours. This process is continued until the watch runs the same in all temperatures. **Not 10 in 100 watches, i. e. not 10% even of the better grade watches are adjusted to temperature.**

Adjusted to Positions Adjusting a watch to positions is adjusting it so it runs the same in various positions. **Not one watch in 200; that is, less than 1/2 of 1% of even the better grade of watches are adjusted to positions. Only the Very Best.**

19 Jewels used are the finest grade of selected genuine imported ruby and sapphire jewels, absolutely flawless. Nineteen of these selected gems protect every point.

Double Jewels—that is, bearings with two jewels each are used in the Burlington. A watch so jeweled requires very much less attention than watches jeweled in any other way.

The U Spring Regulator allows adjustments to the smallest fraction of a second.

Factory Fitted Every Burlington Special movement is fitted into the case right at the factory where the movement was made, into a case made for that watch. No looseness or wearing of parts against the sides of the case. No rattle or jar.

For full description of these superb watches get our new catalog. Write now.

CUT OR TEAR ALONG THIS LINE